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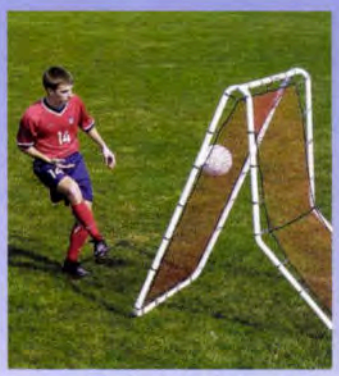

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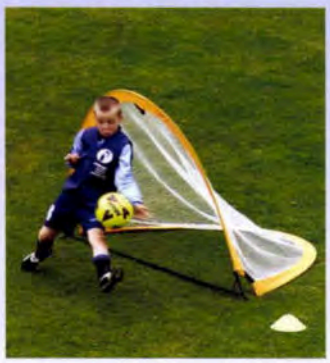

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FEBRUARY 2004

WORLD SOCCER comment

FOOTBALL has a problem with drugs, though not necessarily a drugs problem. The recent cases in England, Italy and Spain (see page 6) have shown that the problem is as much to do with the perception that footballers may be using performance-enhancing substances as with the reality.

We simply cannot be sure that football is free from drugs because the authorities are not acting swiftly enough to prove that is the case. Only in Italy, where regular, random post-match testing is now to be augmented by blood tests, have serious attempts been made to tackle the issue.

Now Sepp Blatter has announced that there is a problem. But it remains to be seen whether the FIFA president is simply using the drugs issue as a stick to beat Man United and the G-14 clubs.

Until blood tests – expensive but the only way of detecting drugs like EPO – are introduced on a regular basis then the suspicion will remain that football, the world's most professional and profitable sport, has something to hide.

Yet too much media coverage of drugs and doping in football is sensationalist and simplistic in its tone. We condemn too easily without asking the deeper questions. The reality is that new, smarter drugs are being developed faster than they can be detected. The line between natural supplements and banned drugs is becoming increasingly blurred.

Should we not be devoting more time and resources to researching the long-term health risks of new drugs such as THG? Come to think of it, should we not be actively encouraging referees to take substances that will make them more alert and responsive, thus improving their decision-making on the pitch?

Ultimately, though, most people are opposed to the use of drugs in football because drugs are perceived to give a particular team or individual an unfair advantage. Yet nobody bats an eyelid when a Russian billionaire rides into town and uses his spare millions to give a previously unsuccessful team a much greater advantage on the pitch than drugs ever could.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor (gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com)

*** SAVE MONEY ON WORLD SOCCER SEE OUR SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION OFFER ON PAGE 46

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RIVALDO GOES HOME

BRAZIL: World Cup-winner Rivaldo returned to Brazil after seven years in Europe, signing a one-year deal with newly-crowned national champions Cruzeiro. **Page 24**

Cienciano stun South America

PERU: Little-known Cienciano, from the town of Cuzco in the Andes, became the first Peruvian club to win a South American tournament when beating Argentina's River Plate in the Final of the Sudamericana Cup. **Page 62**

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP

TUNISIA: The biennial tournament kicks off in Tunis on January 24 with some new faces – Rwanda, Benin and Zimbabwe – but the same old names – Nigeria, Senegal, Cameroon – as favourites to win the trophy. **Page 28**

Cisse ban

FRANCE: *Les Bleus* are set to be without Djibril Cisse for Euro 2004 after the Auxerre striker was banned for five matches following his dismissal in an Under-21 game. **Page 53**

Werder warning

GERMANY: Werder Bremen went into the winter break on top of the Bundesliga – with Bayern Munich, Stuttgart and Leverkusen trailing in their wake. **Page 22**

Matthaus takes on Magyars

HUNGARY: Lothar Matthaus was the surprise choice as the country's new national coach. He arrives from Partizan Belgrade. **Page 60**

BOCA WIN WORLD CLUB CUP

JAPAN: Boca Juniors beat Milan on penalties in Yokohama to maintain South American superiority in the annual intercontinental clash between the club champions of South America and Europe. **Page 75**

Parma crisis

ITALY: Parma, one of the success stories of Italian football in the 1990s, are in danger of going under following the collapse of parent company Parmalat. **Page 20**

Brazil triumph in Abu Dhabi

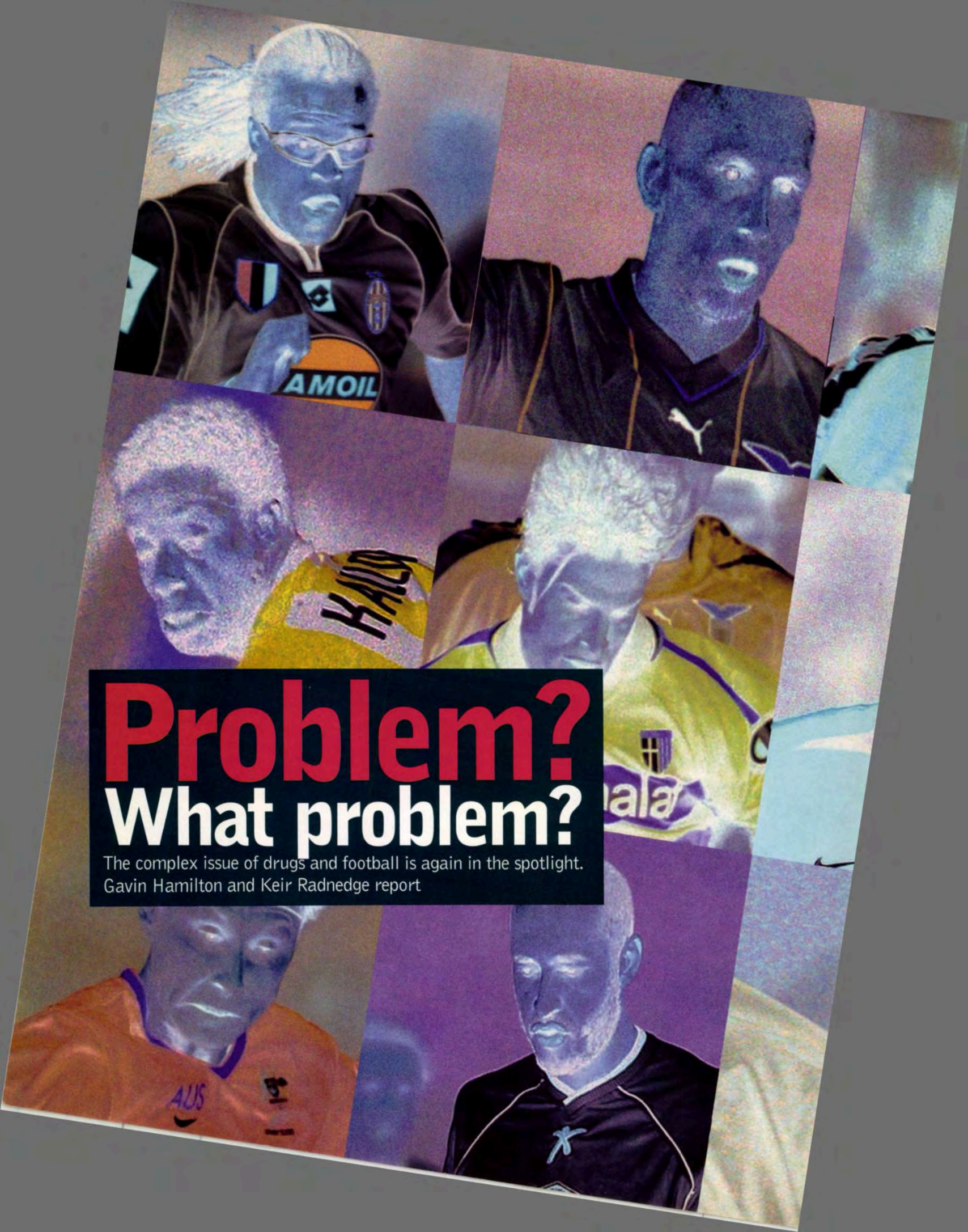
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: Brazil beat Spain 1-0 in the Final to win the Under-20 World Youth Cup for a record fourth time. They also became the first country to hold concurrent world titles at senior, Under-17 and Under-20 levels. **Page 50**

MADRID TANGO AT THE TOP

SPAIN: Real Madrid are on course for another Spanish championship after winning a League match at Barcelona for the first time in 20 years. **Page 18**

Enyimba victory tainted by spoiling tactics

NIGERIA: Enyimba became the first Nigerian team to win Africa's premier club competition when they beat Egypt's Ismaili in the Final of the African Champions League. But their victory was marred by gamesmanship. **Page 65**



Problem? What problem?

The complex issue of drugs and football is again in the spotlight. Gavin Hamilton and Keir Radnedge report

THE U-TURN, when it happened, took everybody by surprise. The occasion was a press conference before the 2006 World Cup draw in Frankfurt. FIFA president Sepp Blatter, aware that he had the ear of the world's media, opted, not for the first time, to play the showman.

"I was wrong saying there was no problem with doping. I thought our game was clean. It is not clean," Blatter admitted, adding for dramatic effect: "Gentlemen, let's get serious."

Blatter often shoots from the lip, scripting his comments to suit his audience. Yet even by his standards, this was a dramatic change of heart.

Last year, Blatter told *World Soccer*: "In football, what matters most is not the dopes, it is recreational drugs. It is a nonsense to have doping in football. What is the essence of doping? You take something to be faster, something to last longer, for stamina. But a player with more muscles is not a better football player because what is needed today is skill, not muscle."

That has been the conventional wisdom regarding football and drugs. But a new generation of drugs (notably EPO, an anaemia treatment used to boost stamina, and the anabolic steroid THG, recently discovered in the United States) is forcing a rethink on the effectiveness of performance-enhancing drugs in football – as well as the effectiveness of the drug-testing procedures.

The scrutiny was set to intensify this month with the calling of FIFA World Player of the Year Zinedine Zidane as a witness at the trial of two Juventus officials accused of "sporting fraud".

General manager Antonio Giraudo and club doctor Riccardo Agricola are accused of administering banned drugs to players between 1994 and 1998. Last October Professor Gianmartino Benzi, a pharmacologist at the University of Pavia, told the trial that Juventus had a store containing 281 medicines, many used in the treatment of senile dementia and other conditions affecting elderly people, rather than athletes. At least five anti-inflammatory drugs found were prohibited.

'I was wrong... I thought our game was clean. It is not clean'

Sepp Blatter

The trial of Giraudo and Agricola is the result of a five-year investigation conducted by Turin magistrate Raffaele Guariniello (see interview, overleaf). The case was sparked by initial claims by former Roma coach Zdenek Zeman that drugs use was common in Serie A.

Since then, the Italian authorities have clamped down hard. Players are tested on a routine basis after every League match, and on a scale far greater than in any other country. Under the overhauled testing procedures, a host of well-known players – including Edgar Davids, Jaap Stam and Josep Guardiola – tested positive for the anabolic steroid nandrolone.

Nandrolone still popular

So far this season, three players – Mohamed Kallon (Inter), Al-Saadi Ghaddafi (Perugia) and Manuele Blasi (Parma) – have tested positive for nandrolone. All three were suspended immediately pending further tests.

The speed players are now dealt with in Italy is in stark contrast to England and Spain. The case of Rio Ferdinand – where the Manchester United and England defender was suspended for eight months for failing to take a random urine test – has been dogged by delays in the bureaucratic process.

FOOTBALL'S DRUG CASES

✖ EDGAR DAVIDS, JUVENTUS
Top left: Tested positive for nandrolone after League game in March 2001; five-month ban.

✖ JAAP STAM, LAZIO
Top centre: Tested positive for nandrolone after League game in October 2001; five-month ban.

✖ CARLOS GURPEGI, ATHLETIC BILBAO
Top right: Tested positive for 19-norandrosterone in September 2002; two-year ban overturned on appeal.

✖ MOHAMED KALLON, INTER
Middle left: Tested positive for nandrolone after League game in September 2003; suspended provisionally.

✖ MANUELE BLASI, PARMA
Middle centre: Tested positive for nandrolone after League game in November 2003; suspended provisionally.

✖ RIO FERDINAND, MANCHESTER UTD
Middle right: Failed to take random drugs test at club training ground in September 2003; eight-month ban.

✖ ANISSA TANN, AUSTRALIA
Bottom left: Leading women's international tested positive for nandrolone in December 2002; two-year ban.

✖ AL-SAADI GHADDAFI, PERUGIA
Bottom centre: Tested positive for nandrolone after League game in October 2003; suspended provisionally.

✖ ALEXANDER WALKE, GERMANY
Bottom right: Tested positive for cannabis derivative THC at 2003 World Youth Cup; seven-month ban.

However, Spain provides the worst example, in Carlos Gurpegi, of how doping cases can drag on to the detriment of the sport.

Gurpegi is a 23-year-old midfielder who broke into the Athletic Bilbao first team at the start of last season, scoring both Bilbao goals in a 4-2 defeat at Real Sociedad on September 1, 2002.

Immediately afterwards, he undertook a routine dope test. More than three months later, on December 10, the Spanish federation announced that he had tested positive for an anabolic steroid, 19-norandrosterone. So began a soccer soap opera that is still running.

After his initial dope test failure was reported, Gurpegi played on until February 2003, when he was suspended provisionally by the Spanish federation. The ban was lifted on appeal by the Spanish sports council in April 2003 on the basis of innocent until proven guilty. The case has since been batted back and forth through the sporting and civil courts – while Gurpegi has carried on playing, scoring four goals from 27 (out of a maximum possible 38) League games last season.

'The doctor would only tell me that it would give me an adrenalin boost'

Tony Cascarino on the injections he received from the Marseille club doctor

Ban overturned

The case finally came up before a full hearing of the Spanish sports disciplinary commission last November, which confirmed a two-year ban. Bilbao fought on through the civil system, with the Spanish high court lifting the ban yet again until the end of this season.

Doping problems have not been confined to major European leagues, nor the men's game. At the recent World Youth Cup, Egypt defender Amir Azmy tested positive for nandrolone and was banned by FIFA for 14 months, while German goalkeeper Alexander Walke received a seven-month ban after a positive test for the cannabis derivative THC.

In December 2002, Australian women's international Anissa Tann was banned for two years after a positive test for nandrolone.

More recently, Beijing Hyundai striker Zhang Shuai became the first player to fail a drugs test in Chinese football after he tested positive for ephedrine after a League match on November 22 last year.

The number of positive drug tests may be considered a drop in the ocean given the total number of professional players worldwide. But there is also growing evidence of past drugs use that went undetected at the time.

The most disturbing aspect of the Guariniello investigation in Italy has been the premature deaths of former players from motor neurone disease, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease after a former US professional baseball player who died from the debilitating condition.

The death of former Genoa defender Gianluca Signorini in November 2002, aged 42, has focused attention on the disproportionate number of ex-professionals who have died from the disease. Guariniello believes up to 70 deaths are suspicious and could have been the result of drugs administered by club officials.

Football's complacency about doping issues has long rested on the East Germany example. In the 1960s and 1970s the GDR sports scientists led the world in a systematic and controlled programme of doping athletes. But for all their expertise, the East Germans could never come up with drugs to make a footballer pass more accurately or shoot more powerfully.

In 45 years of international competition, the East German national team never won the World Cup or European Championship. Indeed, they reached a major finals only once – in 1974.

Now a German historian, Giselher Spitzer, has attempted to lift the lid on the doping strategy undertaken to give East German footballers an international edge. Spitzer claims top GDR players were "pumped full of amphetamines" for European club matches. Among those players would have been Falko Gotz, now coach of 1860 Munich, who played for Dynamo Berlin from 1979 to 1983.

Gotz has said he learned three years ago that he had tested positive for illegal stimulants. He says: "I have been told that I was given substances without my knowledge and that there were two positive tests but that was during my youth and took place without my knowledge."

'I was given substances without my knowledge'

1860 Munich coach Falko Gotz on his time as a player with Dynamo Berlin

Spitzer claims that in 1988 some 15 members of the Dynamo squad were given amphetamines before a European Cup match against Werder Bremen. They beat the West Germans 3-0 at home in East Berlin but before the return, the club halted the amphetamine supply for fear of dope tests. Coincidence or not, Dynamo crashed 5-0.

A shadow of caution still envelops many former GDR players, probably connected with the continuing mystery that surrounded the death of Lutz Eigendorf. The former Dynamo midfielder defected to West Germany and was later killed in a car crash. A finger of blame has long been pointed at the Stasi, the notorious East German secret police.

Elsewhere, retired players have been more forthcoming. Former Republic of Ireland international Tony Cascarino spoke recently about his time at Marseille in the 1990s, when most of the players were given an injection by the club doctor before all their home games.

"To this day I don't have a clue what it was; the doctor would only tell me that it would give me an adrenalin boost, and I never felt inclined to ask the rest," Cascarino said.

"Whatever the substance was, my performances improved. I cling to the sliver of hope that it was legal, though in reality I'm 99 per cent sure it wasn't."

Testing improvements

In 2004, testing is more rigorous, but there remains huge scope for improvement. This month, the Italian authorities begin blood-urine tests for EPO, the first time such tests have been conducted on a domestic basis.

The challenge for football's ruling authorities is to extend the same sort of discipline to other countries. Yet FIFA has yet to sign up to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) code and the suspicion remains that Sepp Blatter will use the issue of doping for his own political ends.

Blatter was swift to denounce Manchester United and the English FA for their conduct in the Ferdinand case. Yet he did not intervene over Gurpegi in Spain. But Bilbao, unlike United, are not members of the increasingly noisy elite of the G-14; there is no political mileage to be gained in winning a battle with the Basques.

The Spanish federation president, Angel Villar, has long been seen as a staunch ally of Blatter, while the English FA declared itself anti-Blatter at FIFA's 2002 presidential election.

When he made his U-turn last December, Blatter said he would abandon plans for a major speech on drugs scheduled for FIFA Congress in Paris in May. Instead, he would compile a special paper by the end of 2003.

But when *World Soccer* went to press in early January, a FIFA spokesperson was unable to confirm a publication date for the Blatter dossier.

Under the microscope

Frank Dunne talks to the Turin magistrate heading the investigation into drugs use in Italian football

WORLD SOCCER: Is there a problem of doping in Italian football?

RAFFAELE GUARINIELLO: When we began to investigate doping in football, in 1998, everybody in football told us we were wasting our time. They said that there was no doping in football because drugs have no use in football, which is a collective rather than individual sport. It was an explanation that left me a bit baffled. Then it was discovered that the laboratory of CONI, the Italian Olympic Committee, was not testing for banned substances, for steroids. So obviously no doping was being discovered. As soon as the laboratory was working properly, they started finding cases of doping.

Some Juventus fans fear their club could end up as a high-profile scapegoat for what has long been a widespread practice in football.

First of all, we don't just deal with football. We are also preparing charges against individuals in tennis, track athletics and boxing. As far as football is concerned, there are two clubs in Turin and we have charged both of them. We opened a case against Torino around the same time as we brought the charges against Juventus. That case is now with the Court of Cassation, the country's highest appeal court. We can only bring charges against clubs in our area. For other clubs, it is up to the authorities in that area and depends on whether they have the evidence or the competence to bring this type of case. As for talking about widespread practices, nobody can say that if they don't have the proof.

Giacomo Aiello, the former head of the anti-doping team at CONI, has said that in Italy punishment for doping depends upon the "peso" or stature of a club. In other words, the big clubs get away with it.

The judiciary in Italy is autonomous so there is no question of there being any kind of conditioning. There can be no political pressure on us. Aiello was referring to the sporting authorities which are invariably an internal organ of a federation and face a thousand difficulties that the justice system doesn't face. In Italy, if there have been forward steps in the battle against doping it is down to the justice system. The sporting authorities have been towed along by the law. To be fair to the sporting authorities, they do not have real powers. All they can do is listen to people and make a decision based upon what they are told.

The Italian football federation has introduced a blood-urine cross test for the drug EPO. Surely this is an important step?

They were talking about this when I first started looking into doping in sport and they are still talking about it. It will be easier to comment once I see the tests up and running. I know that there are people of good will in the federation but I believe in things when I see them in action.

Should there be retrospective testing for the anabolic steroid THG? FIFA, for example, has refused.

It's absolutely fundamental that this is carried out wherever it is technically possible. I have written to CONI to ask for retrospective testing for THG.

Do you think sports federations should throw their weight behind the World Anti-Doping Agency?

In theory, yes, it's good to have a single body overseeing the fight against doping, but we shall have to wait and see what it achieves. Everybody says that they are against doping in sport, but it's action that counts, not words.

The footballer who tests positive for banned substances invariably denies taking anything or claims to be an innocent victim, saying 'I take whatever the club gives me'.

That doesn't surprise me at all. It's normal that everyone tries to blame someone else: the player blames the club doctor, the doctor blames the club, the club blames the player.

This season, we've had three new nandrolone cases, having not had one since November 2001. What does this signify?

It could just be a question of the luck of the draw. There is also a question of integrators which contain traces of steroids now being bought from countries like the US. But there is another possible explanation. When the laboratory started testing properly there was immediately a series of players testing positive for nandrolone. So players probably realised that they had to be more careful. This may have led them to other methods, to using other substances that are harder to trace, like THG. But the re-emergence of nandrolone is a little surprising – the players have not been very inventive!

Tough talk...Guariniello

How far advanced is your investigation into the high incidence of deaths among footballers from illnesses like motor neurone disease?

The investigation is at an advanced stage as far as the work we are doing here is concerned. We have spoken to a very large number of people, including many former players and the friends and relatives of players who have died in recent years.

Could this investigation lead to fresh charges against clubs?

It's premature to speculate. We have given the scientific evidence to experts, who have to try to explain to us what it means – and here we are at the very edge of science, so this may take a long time.

You have said that the *omerta*, the wall of silence among players, is breaking down. Why is that happening?

Largely because of the recent deaths of footballers. More people have been coming forward and have been much more open, which until quite recently was not the case. The effect of seeing people – sometimes former team-mates – die when they are still young has had a profound effect.

Have you received any threats since you began to investigate doping in football?

Yes. But this happens in many areas where there are huge interests at stake. Unfortunately, it's pretty normal. I'd rather not go into the specifics.

World Youth Cup hosts UAE beat Panama 2-1 in their second group match

01/12/03

Galatasaray beat Juventus 2-0 in Dortmund in a Champions League match moved from Turkey because of security worries

02/12/03

Racing driver Michael Schumacher assists with the 2006 World Cup draw in Frankfurt

05/12/03

Werder Bremen and Bayern Munich draw 1-1 in the Bundesliga

06/12/03

WS WORLD SOCCER Good month... bad month...

good...

BRAZIL After victory in the World Youth Cup in the UAE, they became the first country to hold world senior, Under-17 and Under-20 titles at the same time. Next stop, the Olympics...

BOCA JUNIORS World club champions after their victory over Milan in Yokohama. In the annual intercontinental contest, South America now leads Europe by 22 wins to 20.

FABIEN BARTHEZ Back at Marseille and back in action after three months on the sidelines waiting for the transfer window to open.

CELTIC FANS Awarded the 2003 FIFA Fair Play award after their pilgrimage to Seville for the UEFA Cup Final.

CIENCIANO Unheralded Peruvian club who defied the financial gloom engulfing their domestic game to beat River Plate in the Final of the Sudamericana Cup.

bad...

DJIBRIL CISSE France striker banned for five international matches after being sent off for hitting a Portuguese opponent in an Under-21 match. Will miss Euro 2004 unless an appeal is successful.

RIVALDO Voted the worst player in Italian football – ahead of Carsten Jancker and Libyan Al-Saadi Ghaddafi – by a local radio station before signing a one-year deal with Cruzeiro back in Brazil.

FRANK RIJKAARD Barcelona coach under fire for his negative tactics in the home defeat by Real Madrid. With Barça 12th in La Liga, time is running out.

ALFONSO PINO ZAMORANO Referee who set a Spanish League record when he sent off six players (three from each side) in the derby match between Barcelona and Espanyol.

Treble tops...Brazil players show off the World Under-17, World Cup and World Youth Cup trophies

Nakata leads Parma exodus

JAPANESE MIDFIELDER Hidetoshi Nakata (above) was the first player to leave financially-stricken Parma when the transfer window opened on January 1.

Nakata joined Bologna on loan until the summer as Parma reduced their debts in an effort to entice a new buyer following the collapse of parent company Parmalat.

Striker Adriano was set to move to Internazionale, while Parma were also planning to sell other assets such as keeper Sebastien Frey and midfielder Daniele Bonera.

Just as with last summer, the transfer market is polarised between the haves and have-nots. English clubs were again expected to be the big spenders, with Chelsea looking for defensive reinforcements and Manchester United keen on a strike partner for Ruud Van Nistelrooy.

However, Real Madrid were not expected to seek a big mid-season signing, despite the criticism that the Spanish champions lack defensive depth.

Other early movers in England were Bolton, who signed Javi Moreno from Atletico Madrid and Jamaican goalkeeper Donovan Ricketts, and Portsmouth, who moved for defenders Igor Mitreski (Moscow Spartak) and Petri Pasanen (Ajax).

Full transfer round-up in next month's issue.

David Beckham stars as Real Madrid win a League match at bitter rivals Barcelona for the first time in 20 years

06/12/03

Champions Juventus slump to a second consecutive Serie A defeat, losing 2-0 to Lazio in Rome

06/12/03

ESM EUROPEAN SPORTS MAGAZINES

TEAM OF THE MONTH – DECEMBER 2003

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HOW THEY VOTED

A BOLA (POR)

Casillas (Real Madrid); Ricardo Carvalho (FC Porto), Chivu (Roma), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Juninho (Lyon), Zidane (Real Madrid), Totti (Roma), Giuly (Monaco); Ailton (Werder Bremen), Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Van Nistelrooy (Manchester United)

FANATIK (TUR)

Howard (Manchester United); Mancini (Roma), Juan (Bayer Leverkusen), Ayala (Valencia); Ernst (Werder Bremen), Sergen (Besiktas), Liverani (Lazio), Zidane (Real Madrid); Frau (Sochaux), Van Nistelrooy (Manchester United), Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

GAZZETTA DELLO SPORT (ITA)

Pelizzoli (Roma); Hinkel (Stuttgart), Bordon (Stuttgart), Samuel (Roma), Evra (Monaco); Giuly (Monaco), Makelele (Chelsea), Pires (Arsenal); Van Nistelrooy (Manchester United), Totti (Roma), Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

SPORT EXPRESS (RUS)

Schwarzer (Middlesbrough); Michel Salgado (Real Madrid), Ferdinand (Manchester United), Samuel (Roma), Evra (Monaco); Giuly (Monaco), Jesuli (Celta Vigo), Zidane (Real Madrid), Ernst (Werder Bremen); Totti (Roma), Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

VOETBAL INTERNATIONAL (HOL)

Howard (Manchester United); Krstajic (Werder Bremen), Chivu (Roma), Samuel (Roma); Mancini (Roma), Juninho (Lyon), Totti (Roma), Zidane (Real Madrid); Van Nistelrooy (Manchester United), Ailton (Werder Bremen), Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

DON BALON (SPA)

Reinke (Werder Bremen); Toure (Arsenal), Helder (Benfica), Silvestre (Manchester United); Juninho (Lyon), De Jong (PSV), Totti (Roma), Robert (Newcastle); Ailton (Werder Bremen), Van Nistelrooy (Manchester United), Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

FOOT (BLG)

Hildebrand (Stuttgart); Squillaci (Monaco), Krstajic (Werder Bremen), O'Shea (Manchester United); Figo (Real Madrid), Totti (Roma), Zidane (Real Madrid), Mancini (Roma); Ronaldo (Real Madrid), Ailton (Werder Bremen), Van Nistelrooy (Manchester United)

KICKER (GER)

Pelizzoli (Roma); Mancini (Roma), Samuel (Roma), Bridge (Chelsea); Scholes (Manchester United), Ernst (Werder Bremen), Totti (Roma), Juninho (Lyon); Makaay (Bayern Munich), Van Nistelrooy (Manchester United), Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

TIPS-BLADET (DEN)

Canizares (Valencia); Krstajic (Werder Bremen), Southgate (Middlesbrough), Chivu (Roma); Beckham (Real Madrid), Keane (Manchester United), Bernardi (Monaco), Vicente (Valencia); Van Nistelrooy (Manchester United), Totti (Roma), Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

WORLD SOCCER (UK)

Howard (Manchester United); Chivu (Roma), Evra (Monaco), Roberto Carlos (Real Madrid); Nedved (Juventus), Lampard (Chelsea), Totti (Roma), Beckham (Real Madrid); Ailton (Werder Bremen), Henry (Arsenal), Van Nistelrooy (Manchester United)

Notes & quotes

"There are more stars in Qatar than in France."
Frank Leboeuf gets his sums wrong.

"I will not follow the example of Maldini and retire from international football. I aim to continue to 2006 and win another World Cup."
Brazil's captain Cafu sets out his *Selecao* plans.

Carry on, captain...Brazil's Cafu

"Twenty minutes before the bomb went off, I was at that hotel. I was lucky to escape."
New Moscow Spartak boss Nevio Scala tells how he left the Russian capital's National Hotel shortly before a Chechen suicide bomber exploded a device that killed six people.

"Saddam Hussein's got more chance in his American trial than I have of this game being the start of me playing every week."
Deportivo La Coruna reserve Jaime is not optimistic that a good Spanish Cup performance will secure him a regular first-team place.

Japan beat South Korea 2-1 in extra-time to reach the quarter-finals of the World Youth Cup

08/12/03

Chelsea beat Besiktas 2-0 to clinch top spot in their Champions League group

09/12/03

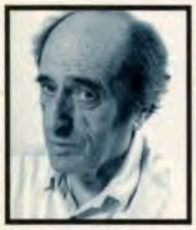
Celta Vigo beat an understrength Milan to reach the second round of the Champions League

09/12/03

Sparta Prague celebrate the 1-0 win over Lazio that secured second place in their Champions League group

09/12/03

WS WORLD SOCCER Brian Glanville



...on TV revenue worries for Premiership clubs... managerial movement speculation...Gordon Taylor's ever-shifting stance on the Ferdinand affair

MARIO MONTI, the competition commissioner of that deeply discredited institution, the European Union, may yet prove to be the nemesis of what I initially called the Greed Is Good League, alias the Premiership.

Monti has long been a thorn in the side of European football. Now, prising live matches away from BSkyB, he may well have sounded the death knell for the Premiership as we know it, and put a charge of explosive under Sky itself.

That Monti should attack the BSkyB deal with the Premiership as constituting a cartel seems highly dubious to me. After all, his initial pressure forced the Premiership to bend itself into shapes when offering its 2004-07 rights this summer, devising all sorts of so-called 'packages', with nightmarish implications for match dates and kick-off times, to keep Monti at bay. The plain hope was that the BBC and ITV would buy up these packages, but in the event Sky successfully bid for them all.

The BBC, in perpetual fear of what might be done to its charter by an interfering and thin-skinned Labour government, obviously would not want to bid too high. ITV couldn't, thanks to their imbecilic adventure into the nether realms of the Nationwide League and the digital system that collapsed so ignominiously and expensively.

Sky has long held a dominant position in the UK football TV market. Now, in the 2004-07 contract it bought for £1billion in August, the company has had to give up the rights to eight live games – to be divided between ITV and BBC, presumably – which will in itself inevitably diminish the amount Sky pays to the Premiership.

But come the contract after that, Monti will presumably demand a far more drastic dilution of its rights. This would at one and the same time torpedo most of the Premiership clubs and potentially raise grave problems for Sky itself, which has relied to so large an extent on its live football programmes.

You can imagine Chelsea and Manchester United surviving such a crisis – provided Roman Abramovich continues to bankroll the former, and the Old Trafford club continue to receive such vast revenue from attendances at their huge stadium and the sale of kit and memorabilia abroad. But they could well be the exceptions.

Would I shed tears? Not many, though I cannot see the logic of Monti's position. It seems to be inspired by a kind of spurious democracy, the implication being that football fans are not being fairly treated. Yet what right, even under the twisted complex of European human rights legislation, has any fan to see live football free on television? Remember that before Sky acquired its contract with the Premier League, live football on TV was very much the exception.

'What right, even under the twisted complex of European human rights legislation, has any fan to see live football free on television?'

The fall in TV revenues stemming from the EU's rulings will surely mean an end to the hyperbolic salaries paid in the Premiership.

The birth of the Premier League meant that relegation from it was a virtual death warrant to any club – they instantly saw their revenue vastly diminished while saddled with a host of expensive contracts with players who were now too costly to keep. Now, most of the clubs who actually manage to remain in the Premiership will find they have to cut their cloth much more carefully.

One can only hope that our leading clubs will as soon as possible start taking steps to limit the damage. But given their profligate record, one cannot be too sure of that.

MUCH TALK OF managerial movements. Claudio Ranieri is staying at Chelsea; he is leaving Chelsea – to be replaced, according to Spanish sources, by their international manager, Inaki Saez.

Ranieri smiled off the suggestion after his side's 3-0 victory over Portsmouth at Stamford Bridge in December. Still, it makes a change from constantly hearing that Sven Goran Eriksson is waiting in the wings.

The England manager, should he leave, is possibly to be replaced

Juninho Pernambucano scores a late penalty to give Lyon a 3-2 win over Celtic in the Champions League

10/12/03

PSV beat Deportivo 3-2 but fail to reach the Champions League knockout stage

10/12/03

Boca Juniors beat Milan on penalties in Yokohama to win the World Club Cup

14/12/03

Notes & quotes

"When he arrived here, he had an excellent right foot, but his left and his heading were Fourth Division standard. To his credit, he has improved both since."

Auxerre boss Guy Roux on the strides made by star striker Djibril Cisse.

by Bayern Munich boss Ottmar Hitzfeld, runs another story. This has been suggested despite the fact that the German's Bayern contract runs until 2005 – that is to say, a year after the European Championship finals – and he does not speak English.

FA chief executive Mark Palios, an increasingly forceful figure, is apparently determined to keep Eriksson, though quite why there is so much support for this I find a little baffling. True, Eriksson lifted England off the floor when qualification for the 2002 World Cup, already dismissed by the lugubrious Howard Wilkinson as a mirage, seemed out of reach. That amazing 5-1 win over Germany in Munich brought it back into focus again, and it was eventually attained, even if form slid and the final, breathless draw against Greece – which meant England finished top of their group – was a flukey embarrassment.

But in Japan, England flopped in the quarter-finals to a Brazil team reduced to 10 men for the last 32 minutes. In the group stage there had been the heartening win over Argentina, but even then Eriksson mysteriously substituted Michael Owen, who had the opposition scared stiff, to put on a second left-back in Wayne Bridge. Then there have been all those half-baked, fraud-on-the-paying-public friendlies, with nearly a whole team changed at half-time.

'Instead of telling Gary Neville to grow up, Gordon Taylor seemed to line up with the adolescent England players'

Other managerial speculation concerns Guus Hiddink of PSV Eindhoven, allegedly wanted by Spurs, though why he should want to go there in the club's present ailing condition is anyone's guess.

It would surely make a lot more sense for England to go for Hiddink, who, unlike Hitzfeld, not only speaks excellent English but also has impressive international experience, latterly in the World Cup when he led the unfancied South Koreans to the semi-finals.

THE POSTURING AND pronouncing of Gordon Taylor, of the Professional Footballers' Association, has been hard to understand. Don't ask me where he'll be coming from next on the murky Rio Ferdinand affair.

First, he was trumpeting the alleged injustice to the Manchester United defender, suspended from the England squad for failing – forgetting? Don't make me laugh – to take that drugs test.

Instead of telling Gary Neville to grow up, behave himself and stop acting like an old-fashioned shop steward, Taylor seemed to line up with the adolescent England players. In fact, they all deserved to have their backsides kicked and be dropped from the squad. As for dedicating to Ferdinand that hardly distinguished 0-0 draw in Istanbul against a declining Turkey, words fail me.

Then, after Ferdinand's eight-month suspension had been pronounced, Taylor went on television and burbled that the player didn't deserve to be punished because he had never been found guilty of drug-taking.

This begged many questions. Ferdinand may or may not have been guilty, but we shall never know, because he ran away from the test.

Since that TV interview, Taylor has done a bizarre U-turn, excoriating United for their tough attitude, alleging that Ferdinand would have got off more lightly had he admitted his guilt in dodging the test, thus incurring a lesser punishment.

Read Brian Glanville's weekly column at www.worldsoccer.com

Getting better...Djibril Cisse

"The players have to look at themselves in the mirror. They should realise they live in an oasis of good fortune."

Bayern Munich general manager Uli Hoeness seeks to prompt a reaction from his underperforming players.

"In French football, it seemed I only had enemies, whereas in Spain I've been made welcome. I no longer feel a shotgun pointed at my back."

Tired of being the *bete noire* of the French press, ex-Paris Saint-Germain coach Luis Fernandez is happy to leave the French capital for Espanyol of Barcelona.

Zinedine Zidane receives his 2003 FIFA World Player award in Basle

15/12/03

Lens beat Bordeaux 2-0 to reach the quarter-finals of the French League Cup

16/12/03

Midfielder Sebastian Battaglia is presented to the Spanish press after joining Villarreal from Boca Juniors

16/12/03

Rio Ferdinand receives an eight-month ban for missing a drugs test in September

19/12/03

WS WORLD SOCCER Paul Gardner

...on the mystery appeal of Brazil's football

BRAZIL! The sparkle of yellow shirts and blue shorts on a green field...and immediately the game not only looks different, it *feels* different.

Is there a secret to the way Brazilians play football? A mystical ingredient that makes Brazilian football a headier, more exciting, more wondrous brew of the sport?

I can't pin it down. But I'll bet that anyone with experience of the international game knows what I mean, has felt the extra thrill, the special frisson that sets in as Brazil take the field.

The Beautiful Game has suffered lately under the onslaught of commercialism and what I will call 'realist' coaching. Those two activities have no place for subtlety, nor artistry, nor magic. Results are the bottom line.

"We are the best team in the world, without the ball," proclaimed Egil Olsen when coach of Norway in a spectacularly silly moment. Of course, it wasn't meant to be silly, it was meant to be very knowing, and was no doubt treated as such by a lot of people who ought to know better. But it was a revealing moment, one that said a lot about the modern game.

Pity about the ball, eh Egil? If only football were all running and tactics and clever television interviews. But there's always that damn ball.

And that's where the magic starts. That's where Brazil take over. Let me quote a photographer friend of mine who was once idly watching Brazil warm up for a game, while their opponents did the same near the other goal: "You could hear the ball being struck every time from the other end of the field. But from the Brazilians, in front of me, only voices and laughter. The ball was pushed and stroked, but softly, quietly. No noise."

Almost as though the Brazilians use a different ball. And in a way, I think they do. A ball that they can bring to life in a way that players from no other country can do. A mischievous little thing, yet one that allows itself to be coaxed into all sorts of tricks. Not a ball that is bludgeoned into them, nor giddied by being repeatedly thumped into the heavens, nor bored into doing nothing but roll sideways.

A ball that really does seem to respond differently to Brazilian players than it does to Germans, Scots or anyone else.

So we've arrived at the Brazilian player. Is he different from all the others? Would it be silly to make such a claim?

I think not. A comparison is in order. Take Pavel Nedved, just voted *World Soccer's* player of 2003. No one would ever mistake Nedved for a Brazilian player, simply because of the way he *moves*, the herky-jerky hurry of his action. I am not commenting on effectiveness, here – this is a matter of style.

'I'll bet that anyone with experience of the international game has felt the special frisson that sets in as Brazil take the field'

Smoothness is the essence of the Brazilian player, a smoothness that breeds the subtleties and artistry that separate the Brazilian game from the rest of the football world.

Am I making wild claims for Brazil? Again, I think not. Since June 2002 I have watched Brazil win the World Cup, plus the Under-17 and the Under-20 versions. The players did not always perform as I have described, but mostly they did. One would have to be deliberately obtuse not to see the superior ease about their play and an almost total absence of panting and puffing.

Movement. Berti Vogts saw it: "Germans dance like refrigerators compared with Brazilians," was his comment. So are the rest of us doomed to be refrigerators for ever? I don't see why. Movement can be learned – and soccer movement even more so, if that is what is required. But if a soccer culture insists on exalting long balls or discipline or play without the ball, then forget it.

The game of football is first and foremost about *players*. The youth tournament triumphs show that when it comes to producing players Brazil does a much better job than any other country.

I can now hear the realist coaches grinding their teeth and saying this is all romantic twaddle, and don't I know how hard Brazil can be, and so on. Yes, gentlemen, I know all that. But I also know Brazil invariably have an extra, glittering facet that repeatedly raises their game above the rest. It is the magic of players who have learned to be one with the ball, whose ease of movement is a joy to behold and whose play is the wonder of the football world. The magic of the spell cast by those glowing yellow shirts.

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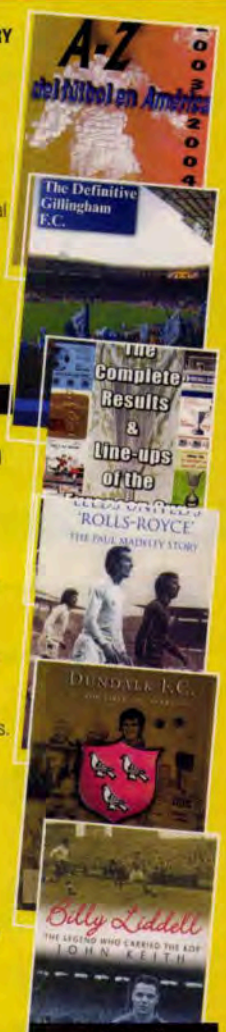

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22/12/03

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26/12/03

Kuwait beat tournament newcomers Yemen 4-0 in the Gulf Cup

01/01/04

Japan star Hidetoshi Nakata joins Bologna on loan from Parma

03/01/04

Struggling Real Sociedad win 2-1 at Malaga in La Liga

04/01/04

WS WORLD SOCCER Tim Vickery

Brazilian clubs' 50 per cent hike in terrace admission prices shows an astonishing lack of foresight...and sense

MANY YEARS AGO an attempt was made to introduce the camel as a beast of burden in Brazil's arid north-east. But the newcomer was unable to adapt to the soil. The experiment was quickly forgotten, and the traditional donkey was soon back in action.

With camel-headed idiocy, the directors of Brazil's football clubs have agreed a 50 per cent hike in the price of terrace admission for this year's national championship. Such increases worked very well in England, it is argued.

A more spurious comparison would be hard to find. Premiership grounds offer top facilities, and English society has plenty of people willing and able to pay for them. Marketing the game in England is a bit like breeding rabbits – animals that seem to get along with it well enough when left to their own devices. Marketing the game in Brazil is more like breeding pandas. Average attendances for the last championship were around 10,000 – a figure where the odd massive crowd hides plenty of 2,000 gates, a pitiful sight in a stadium as huge as the Maracana.

Stadium facilities are gradually improving, but this is the least of the game's worries. Inadequate transport and terrifying streets undermine the very concept of public space and turn getting home after the game into something like Napoleon's retreat from Russia.

But the biggest impact of all is caused by the fact that, according to official statistics, half the country's workforce earn less than £60 a month.

Brazilian football cannot afford to price these people out of its stadiums. And football is live entertainment, where the crowd are much more than spectators. They are participants, providing the atmosphere that is an essential part of the experience. TV transmissions, executive boxes and showpiece seats all lose their appeal without the passion generated on the terraces.

Before it can think about raising prices, Brazilian football has to find a way to get more people through the turnstiles week in, week out. It was in an attempt to solve this problem that the format of the national championship was changed last year.

The old play-off format was undeniably exciting. But it limped on for ages before catching fire at the end. So it was replaced by a European-style league system, with all the teams playing each other home and away.

It failed because one crucial detail was overlooked. The European season starts in style because of the summer break. After three months away the fan is desperate to get back to the stadium. He wants to see his club's new signings, and has had time to convince himself that his team will spring a surprise. Going to the first games creates the habit that sustains him through the season.

But in Brazil the big kick-off came just a week after the wretched state championships had ended. There was no magic. The fan was well acquainted with his team and their limitations. Why spend scarce money going to watch them?

The format has been retained for this year – with the added handicap of higher admission prices. This particular camel faces a tough battle to adapt itself to Brazilian soil.

'Half of Brazil's workforce earn less than £60 a month. Football can't afford to price these people out of its stadiums'

Nedved is Euro choice

PAVEL NEDVED followed up his triumph as *World Soccer's* 2003 World Player of the Year, announced last month, by taking the European Footballer of the Year accolade.

The Juventus and Czech Republic midfielder scored 190 points in the annual poll of European journalists organised by *France Football*, finishing well clear of Thierry Henry and Paolo Maldini, on 128 and 123 points respectively.

However, Nedved was only fourth in FIFA's world player award, voted for by national coaches. Zinedine Zidane won it for the third time, ahead of Henry and Ronaldo.

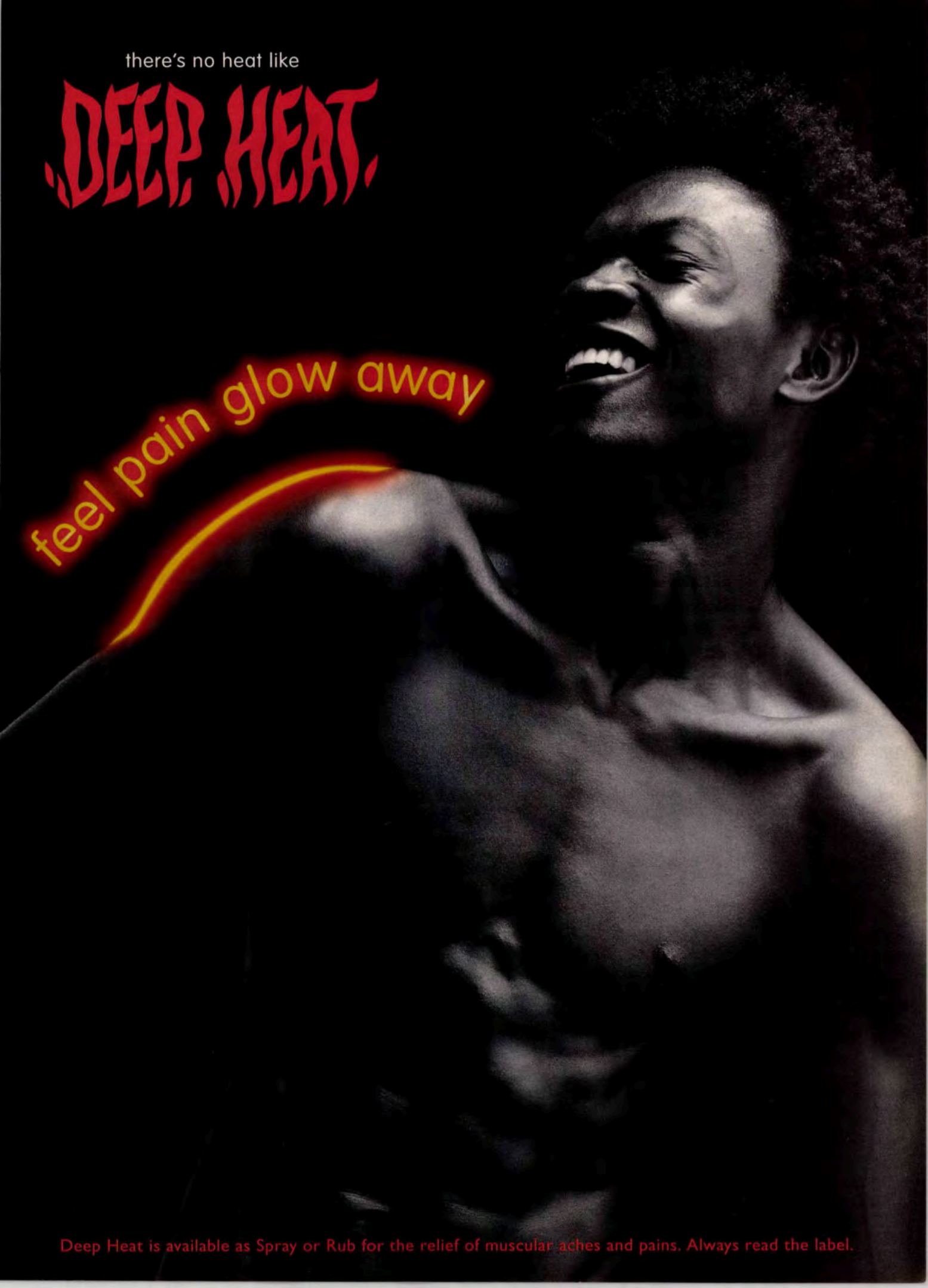
● *Full FIFA award voting in World Service, starting on page 75.*

2003 EUROPEAN FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR

		points
1	Pavel Nedved	190
2	Thierry Henry	128
3	Paolo Maldini	123
4	Andrii Shevchenko	67
5	Zinedine Zidane	64
6	Ruud Van Nistelrooy	61
7	Raul	32
8	Roberto Carlos	27
9	Gianluigi Buffon	19
10	David Beckham	17

2003 FIFA WORLD PLAYER OF THE YEAR

		points
1	Zinedine Zidane	264
2	Thierry Henry	186
3	Ronaldo	176
4	Pavel Nedved	158
5	Roberto Carlos	105
6	Ruud Van Nistelrooy	86
7	David Beckham	74
8	Raul	39
9	Paolo Maldini	37
10	Andrii Shevchenko	26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Tango at the top

SID LOWE
in Madrid

Real Madrid's historic win in Barcelona helped keep them clear in the championship race

TANGOS ARE NOT normally the stuff of sports pages, yet sure enough there was the famous song title *Veinte anos no es nada* splashed across Madrid dailies *Marca* and *AS*.

The reason was simple enough. The title translates as 'Twenty years is nothing' and, as a gleeful *AS* put it, Real Madrid had just "sung a tango at Camp Nou". They had beaten bitter rivals Barcelona away in the League for the first time in 20 years, 2-1, with a goal in each half from Roberto Carlos and Ronaldo.

The stars were David Beckham (whose team-mates singled him out as the key with his never-say-die English attitude), goalkeeper Iker Casillas, who made his now-customary string of outrageous saves, and Ronaldo.

The Brazilian just keeps on scoring, becoming ever more decisive. Every day he looks larger, it is true, but every day he also looks more like the most important player in Spain. "Ronnie plays best pregnant," wrote ex-Argentina goalkeeper Hugo Gatti, while Roberto Carlos, who has clearly never watched Benny Hill, insisted that "Ronaldo's not fat – fat people can't run that fast."

If they were the heroes, Barcelona manager Frank Rijkaard was the villain. The Catalan daily *Sport* spoke for everyone in featuring a Rijkaard-bound arrow emblazoned with "Guilty!"

His alleged crime was cowardice – Barcelona started with just Patrick Kluivert up front and a deep-lying, patient midfield with little creativity or width. That 'mistake' was made starker after Rijkaard

Groundshaking...Ronaldo takes a tumble over Carles Puyol during Real Madrid's 2-1 win in Barcelona

made half-time changes and things improved. He threw on Marc Overmars, Ricardo Quaresma and, later, Javier Saviola, Barça dominated, Kluivert pulled a goal back late on, and Real were forced to hang on. Casillas earned four stars (out of three).

"The defeat of fear: Rijkaard threw away the first 45," ranted *Sport's* cover, while *El Mundo Deportivo* bemoaned Barça "gifting the first half". Columnist J J Santos went further, spitting out: "It's true that the coward who hides lives to fight another battle, but Rijkaard will take years to rid himself of the stigma. We never imagined he would renounce football itself."

Rijkaard admitted: "Like the team, my position is precarious" – and Barça's position deteriorated after the Real defeat. They opened the new year with a 3-0 defeat at Racing Santander to slump to 12th place, 18 points behind Madrid.

By contrast, Rijkaard's opposite number, Carlos Queiroz – much questioned just days before the Camp Nou game – came up smelling of roses. Not just because of the victory, but also because it was the third successful step of a four-stage ordeal that many expected to find out him and Madrid.

Having been thrashed 4-1 by Sevilla and unconvincingly defeated First Division newcomers Albacete 2-1 at the Bernabeu, Madrid faced a daunting run: away to Osasuna in Pamplona's hostile El Sadar, where they traditionally lose, home to Atletico Madrid, away to Barça and home to Deportivo La Coruna. Madrid were yet to defeat a truly decent side this season (they lost in Valencia), so the knives were waiting for Queiroz and his players.

But now they were flying. They had drawn 1-1 against Osasuna, with a Ronaldo goal from Beckham's pass. They had defeated Atletico thanks to Ronaldo's 14-second opener. And they had silenced 98,000 Barça fans, ending a 20-year curse. It got even better: Madrid then completed the run by beating Deportivo 2-1 and went on to defeat Mallorca 3-1 and Murcia 1-0.

Valencia stay in touch

That left Madrid top, having collected 16 points from a possible 18. And yet their run is deceptive. Nor has it been decisive. A game from the halfway point, Madrid were 14 points clear of Osasuna in fourth and Atletico in fifth, but they haven't shaken off their immediate challengers. Depor, for whom striker Albert Luque, playing on the left, has been outstanding, trailed by six. Valencia, growing ever stronger with Mista resolving the No 9 crisis, also collected 16 points from 18 and trailed by just two.

But that's not the reason the run hasn't convinced everyone. Some warn that while Beckham has given Madrid more spirit, meaning they no longer lie down against sides like Osasuna, their real problem is psychological. Winning the big games means nothing: they're more likely to struggle against poor sides because, gorged on the glamour, they care little for the mundane – they can't motivate themselves.

"Maybe it's unconscious," wrote *AS* reporter Juanma Trueba. "Like going out to buy bread. I don't run to the baker's, and nor do you if you can get there walking. But perhaps someone sees you from their window; perhaps your trip to the baker's is everything to them and they expect a sprint or at least a bit of effort, an elbow against a neighbour. But, no. Sometimes we amble to the baker's and it's shut. Madrid are like that. They could do more, but that would be excessive – like going for bread and buying the paper too."

● "I refused to shake his hand because it was a false offering. He looked at me and touched his genitals. Does that sound like a nice gesture to you?" Argentinian full-back Lionel Scaloni wasn't impressed with David Beckham after their run-in during Depor's visit to the Bernabeu.

Beckham responded: "I don't know why he wouldn't shake my hand. I didn't even know he was Argentinian – they've just told me in the dressing-room. That's another one who doesn't like me!"

Face-off...Beckham and Scaloni

The run also suggests better performances than Madrid have delivered. They were dreadful and thankful for some extremely debatable refereeing against Murcia, who were denied three penalty shouts; far from dominant against Barça; undeserving of a point against an excellent, but incredibly wasteful Osasuna; and in need of an 85th-minute winner against Depor. Only against Atletico did they truly perform.

Beckham apart, Madrid have relied on Casillas and Ronaldo. As a side, they haven't been great (Raul, in particular, has been disappointing), but they've had too much individual ability; even when they are not dominant, they are decisive.

Victory in Mallorca embodied their season. The islanders swarmed all over Madrid and went one up, yet – with Casillas stopping everything – they couldn't put the game out of sight. Even after Raul equalised, Mallorca poured forward, but opposing strikers Samuel Eto'o and Ronaldo summed up the night: Eto'o tried everything and got nothing, Ronaldo tried nothing and got everything.

The ambling Brazilian seemed disinterested – until the 55th minute. Eto'o had just hit a post when Ronaldo woke up, dashed clear, bamboozled Federico Lussenhoff with a step-over and hit a perfect cross-shot. It was the identikit Ronaldo goal. And it was 2-1. Thirteen minutes later, another sprint, a foul by Miguel Nadal, and Luis Figo slotted in the penalty. It was Ronaldo, and Madrid, all over.

If Queiroz has beaten the critics (for now), it's a very different story for Zaragoza's Paco Flores, Betis's Victor Fernandez and Murcia's Joaquin Peiro, who have joined Frank Rijkaard in the electric chair with results, fans and press turning against them.

Yet even their precarious positions pale in comparison to that of Celta boss Miguel Angel Lotina, whose side were slaughtered 5-0 at Balaidos – their heaviest home defeat since 1944. And it gets worse: while that distant drubbing came from Real Oviedo, the latest came at the hands of Galician rivals Depor. Which hurts.

To add insult to injury, it also sent Celta into the bottom three. No wonder local newspaper *El Faro de Vigo* screamed: "Shameful! Celta wrote the most ridiculous page in their history." The board met to consider Lotina's future – and offer him the dreaded, half-hearted vote of confidence – as the fans called for his head.

'Ronaldo's not fat – fat people can't run that fast'

Roberto Carlos defends his team-mate

Alarm bells for Parma

The club are in danger of going under after Parmalat's collapse

PADDY AGNEW in Rome

THE NEW YEAR began as the old year ended, with Italian football caught up in dramatic financial crisis as Parma tried to come to terms with the collapse of their owner, multinational dairy foods giant Parmalat.

It was bad enough that we have seen the demise and rebirth of Fiorentina in recent seasons, not to mention the near liquidation of Lazio and a chronic cash shortage at Roma. But it is even more disheartening to discover that the very future of Parma is in jeopardy.

The stricken Parmalat is currently in the hands of a state-appointed administrator, Enrico Bondi, who has made it clear he will sell off any non-essential asset in his desperate attempt to part-salvage the company, safeguarding jobs and suppliers. Clearly, with Parmalat's debts running to £8billion, the football club represents small fry. But perhaps it is appetising fry, given the seemingly never-ending fatal attraction of football clubs to industrial makers and shakers. In that context, Bondi's strategy seems clear enough – first, he hopes to save the club as a going, Serie A concern, and then, at a later date (perhaps at the end of the season), sell it to the highest bidder.

All of this, needless to say, is easier said than done. For a start, even before Parmalat's collapse, Parma's most recent balance sheet showed them to be £55million in the red. Secondly, the club needs around £40m to cover running costs (above all, wages, which have not been paid since October) through to the end of the season.

For the time being, a corporate recapitalisation worth up to £35m and the sale or loan of players should keep the club afloat. Brazilian striker Adriano has already been bought by Internazionale for £16m (though he may not actually move until the summer), while Japanese midfielder Hidetoshi Nakata has been loaned to Bologna, thus relieving Parma of his £3m salary. French goalkeeper Sebastien Frey and Italian international defenders Daniele Bonera and Matteo Ferrari could also soon be on their way.

Prime asset...the sale of Adriano to Internazionale has raised £16million for beleaguered Parma

● The first big League clash of 2004 came at Rome's Stadio Olimpico, where Milan surprised leaders Roma by winning a thrilling game 2-1. The result could have gone either way, but was eventually decided by the lethal finishing of Andrii Shevchenko, scorer of both Milan goals.

From the neutral viewpoint, the result was perfect since it left the situation very tight at the top of the table. Milan stayed joint second with Juventus but both moved to within three points of Roma, with Inter two points back in fourth. Financial scandals and corporate collapses allowing, we could be in for another right-down-to-the-wire Serie A title contest.

Tight squeeze...Roma v Milan

There is not the space here to offer an in-depth analysis of the Parmalat collapse. Yet some aspects of the scandal impinge directly on Parma, given that the collapse was brought about by both complicated off-balance sheet financial transactions (i.e. cooking the books) as well as some level of collusion between banks, auditors and directors.

Firstly, there is the testimony given to investigators by former Parmalat finance director Fausto Tonna, a man who played a crucial role in the rise and rise of the one-time modest Tanzi family-run business (hams and preserves) into a multinational corporate giant employing 36,400 people at 139 plants worldwide and with estimated annual revenues in excess of £5bn.

Unravelling the web

In the wake of the Parmalat collapse in late December, Tonna was one of eight people arrested, along with Parmalat founding father Calisto Tanzi – whose son Stefano Tanzi is Parma president – and senior figures at Grant Thornton International, the accounting firm that audited Parmalat's books from 1990 to 1999.

During questioning, Tonna outlined details of the working relationship between Calisto Tanzi and Sergio Cragnotti, ex-owner of Lazio and one-time head of the now bankrupt Cirio tinned foods empire. Tonna claimed the transfers of Argentinian Juan Veron (from Parma to Lazio in 1999 for £21m), his compatriot Matias Almeyda (Parma to Lazio in 2000 for £15m) and Portuguese winger Sergio Conceicao (Lazio to Parma in 2000 for £11m) had all been cooked up within the overall ambit of the complex business relations between Parmalat and Cirio, two companies that regularly did each other 'favours'. In other words, the transfers had nothing to do with football logic and everything to do with cynical business calculations.

Tonna's revelations only confirm what we already knew. Namely, that powerful businessmen-turned-football club owners tend to run clubs in the best interests of their own often creative methods of accountancy not of the football team.

Yet Parma had always seemed a modern, open-minded club that perfectly embodied the combination of industrial flair, sound book-keeping and skilful trading that has for so long been a hallmark of the city and its surrounding Emilia Romagna region.

Last summer, when Parma announced they were reducing their squad from 37 to 22 players, in the process reducing the wage bill from £50m to £22m, it seemed a typical piece of good housekeeping. The impression was that Parma were trying to work their way back to their debut years in Serie A, in the early 1990s, when the club had distinguished themselves by combining winning results with modest annual budgets.

For much of the past decade and more, Parma have been a remarkable success story. The provincial side that have been a match for the greats of Italian and European football in winning two UEFA Cups, one Cup-winners Cup, three Italian Cups and twice finishing second in Serie A.

Credit and debit

Many of us gave much of the credit for the club's success to the canny and enlightened administration of the Tanzi family, who via Parmalat own 98.5 per cent of the club. In the wake of the Parmalat crash, that analysis does not look so smart.

On the football front, Parma showed they were not going to be intimidated by the crisis, opening their 2004 account with an important if not entirely impressive 2-0 win at seemingly relegation-bound Ancona. Midfielder Simone Barone scored both goals and then commented next day, with refreshing pragmatism: "The more we win, the higher up the table we go and we stay, the easier it will be to find a new owner, no?"

Indeed, yes. By the way, if any *World Soccer* reader out there is interested, the current asking price for Parma football club, debts and all, is between £100m and £110m. Any takers?

'The more we win, the higher up the table we go, the easier it will be to find a new owner'

Parma midfielder Simone Barone

While Parma were winning away, Juventus were doing the same at home, disposing of Perugia with their usual workmanlike job. The only goal was far from ordinary, however. Czech Pavel Nedved hit a spectacular long-range shot as he bid for the 2004 European Goal of the Year award to match the 2003 European Player of the Year trophy he paraded during a lap of honour around the Stadio Delle Alpi before the game.

Werder warning

NICK BIDWELL
in Munich

The Bremen club announced their title intentions by going into the new year on top

WERDER BREMEN, the League leaders at the winter break, have thrown down the gauntlet. In 27 out of 40 Bundesliga campaigns, the 'autumn champions' have gone on to claim the crown; with the current pacesetters four points clear at the top of the table, the tradition appears in good hands.

Werder coach Thomas Schaaf, a dependable full-back when the club won the German championship in 1988 and 1993, may not be the most loquacious of personalities, but his team certainly know how to express themselves in the attacking third. Midfield all-rounder Fabian Ernst is in the form of his life, French international playmaker Johan Micoud is elegantly pulling the strings, and Brazilian marksman Ailton has netted 16 times to head the national scoring chart.

Ailton holds the key. When on song, his strength, blinding acceleration and powerful left foot are too much for most Bundesliga defenders. However, he does have a reputation for losing interest in the second half of the season, a phenomenon that could be exacerbated by thoughts of his end-of-season move to Schalke.

Inevitably, the fast-moving, fast-talking Brazilian sees things differently: "There's no reason why I cannot be as effective when the League restarts. I've never played better in my five years at Bremen. In fact, at this moment, I'm the best striker in the Bundesliga. I've always been quick but now I'm timing my runs so much better. I'm confident and totally relaxed on the pitch. I may be 30 but I have the energy of a 15-year-old. I'll be looking to end my time at Bremen on a high note."

A certain lack of depth to the Werder squad may yet prove their undoing. Defensively, in particular, they do not have much in the way of cover, and any injuries in that area could allow joint-second-placed Bayern Munich, Leverkusen and Stuttgart to make ground.

Of the chasing pack, Stuttgart seem the best equipped to go the distance – during the first half of the season they showed great

Roaring success...Ailton celebrates yet another goal during his prolific autumn campaign for Werder Bremen

youthful enthusiasm (the team's average age is just 24), such good organisation at the back that they conceded only seven League goals, and plenty of fluency and inventiveness going forward. Indeed, they deserved to be the autumn champions but lost top spot in mid-December after two unfortunate defeats, at Bayern Munich (1-0) and at home to Leverkusen (3-2).

Stuttgart coach Felix Magath, who took advantage of the winter break to get married, was being excessively gloomy when he concluded that he needed players with more individual quality. His team's achievements this season – a 15-game unbeaten run in the Bundesliga and qualification for the second round of the Champions League – speak for themselves; starlets Andreas Hinkel, the right-back, and striker Kevin Kuranyi were sufficiently optimistic about the club's prospects to sign long-term deals.

At Bayern Munich, it has been a case of never mind the quality, feel the results. Yes, they remain in the hunt in both the Bundesliga and the Champions League, but they have ridden their luck of late. In the decisive Champions League tie with Anderlecht, they owed their 1-0 victory to a dubious penalty call from referee Kim Milton Nielsen; three days later they were dominated for long periods by Stuttgart, only prevailing thanks to a string of timely stops from keeper Oliver Kahn and Roy Makaay's late winner following a blunder by Stuttgart's Portuguese centre-back Fernando Meira.

Recharged...Hans Meyer

● Hertha Berlin began the season aiming to secure a Champions League spot, but after winning only twice during the autumn they are another side now in real danger of relegation. Dutch coach Huub Stevens was finally fired after a 6-1 German Cup hammering by Werder Bremen in early December, with veteran ex-Monchengladbach coach Hans Meyer handed the reins. On leaving Gladbach last spring, the 61-year-old had vowed he would never coach again, saying: "Even if Real Madrid called me, I'd say no." He might live to regret his change of mind.

Ballack the big concern

Although a 6-0 League win at Freiburg was a fine way to end the year, Bayern boss Ottmar Hitzfeld has several areas of concern: the failure of the three-man attack, approach play that is invariably too slow and imprecise, and a gaggle of out-of-touch stars. Wide midfielders Ze Roberto and Hasan Salihamidzic are desperately short of confidence, while French full-backs Willy Sagnol and Bixente Lizarazu are not getting forward with their usual elan. But by far the biggest worry is the form of Michael Ballack, who has looked a pale shadow of the stylish goalscoring midfielder so impressive during his days at Leverkusen.

As usual it was left to Bayern vice-president Franz Beckenbauer to tell the necessary home truths: "If we continue playing like we did against Anderlecht, we have no chance of going any further. Our performance against the Belgians had nothing to do with football. In the second half especially we were always a step slower than Anderlecht. There was little or no movement in our team. Our opponents were simply more alert, and it has to be said that they are not Real Madrid [who Bayern must face in the next round of the Champions League] or Manchester United."

The list of Bundesliga title contenders is completed by Leverkusen, who after narrowly avoiding relegation last term are again showing the sort of togetherness and purpose that made them European and Bundesliga runners-up in 2001-02. Coached by hard-nosed ex-Bayern skipper Klaus Augenthaler, the team have Brazilian excellence at the core of their revival.

Brazilians lead revival

Now fully recovered from the foot injury that kept him out for several months last season, centre-back Lucio has been imperious, highly effective in both defensive mode and as the team's first counter-attacker; Juan has been outstanding, whether at right-back or at the heart of the defence; while, after two years on loan at Wolfsburg, playmaker Robson Ponte has been in creative overdrive, playing so well that little Turkish midfielder Yildiray Basturk has had to make do with a place on the bench.

If they are to win their first Bundesliga title, however, the Rhinelanders need to solve two major problems: 1) How to get more goals out of forwards Oliver Neuville and Bulgarian Dimitar Berbatov; 2) How to get German international attacking midfielder Bernd Schneider out of his personal slump.

At the other end of the table, a lack of class has left newly-promoted Eintracht Frankfurt and Koln struggling for survival, while Kaiserslautern's propensity to concede soft goals and poor disciplinary record continue to bog them down in the division's lower reaches.

Borussia Dortmund were the major disappointment of the autumn campaign, failing to qualify for the Champions League, losing heavily to Sochaux in the second round of the UEFA Cup and heading off for Christmas in sixth place in the League, no fewer than 14 points adrift of Werder Bremen.

True the *Dortmunder* were hit by injuries to key players, notably midfield workhorse Torsten Frings, defender Christoph Metzelder and front-man Marcio Amoroso. But they do have a larger squad than most, and their fans have the right to expect more than just one away win in the League prior to the winter shutdown.

'At Bayern, it has been a case of never mind the quality, feel the results'

Back home...Rivaldo, in action for Brazil in a World Cup qualifier in Peru, has been reunited at champions Cruzeiro with his former boss Vanderlei Luxemburgo

Rivaldo returns

The World Cup winner's arrival at champions Cruzeiro is a major boost for the domestic game

BRIAN HOMEWOOD in Rio de Janeiro

CRUZEIRO, ALREADY ON a high after winning the Brazilian championship for the first time, pulled off a major coup by signing World Cup winner Rivaldo on a one-year contract.

Rivaldo, who spent the past 18 months warming the bench at Milan, was released by the European champions at the end of last year. He was then linked with a number of clubs, including Al Ittihad of Saudi Arabia, Portugal's FC Porto, Spanish strugglers Espanyol, Moscow Spartak and Mexico's America.

Rio de Janeiro club Botafogo, who were offered financial help from the city government, were also interested in signing Rivaldo. But in the end Cruzeiro secured his signature with the help of sponsorship from a local pharmaceutical company. Rivaldo joins a Cruzeiro team that won the national championship in emphatic style, finishing their 46-match campaign with 100 points, 102 goals scored and a whopping 13 points ahead of second-placed Santos, last year's champions.

As this was the first time the competition has been run on a conventional league basis, Cruzeiro could also claim to be the country's first truly legitimate national champions. The title meant the Foxes completed a treble, having won the Copa Brasil in the first half of the year as well as the Minas Gerais championship.

Cruzeiro's achievements were all the more impressive given

that the team is made up of 'rejects'. Only 18 months ago, the career of midfielder Alex, Cruzeiro's inspiration, was heading into oblivion as he seemed incapable of finding the motivation to bring out the best of his extraordinary talent. He had gone through unhappy spells at Palmeiras and Flamengo, and his Brazil career also seemed over since he was part of the team disgraced by the shock quarter-final defeat by Honduras in the 2001 Copa America.

"This is my comeback after two bad years," said Alex, whose left foot produced some sublime moments. He capped his season by scoring five goals, including four penalties, as Cruzeiro whacked relegation-bound Bahia 7-0 away on the final day.

Alex was backed by three other players whose careers had gone into downward spirals. Brazil's 1994 World Cup winner Zinho found refuge at the club after being kicked out of Palmeiras, where he was in the team relegated at the end of 2002. He was joined by central defender Cris, who failed to settle at Bundesliga club Bayer Leverkusen and saw his international career disappear down the drain after scoring an own goal in the 2-1 World Cup qualifying defeat by Argentina in 2001. Colombian striker Victor Aristizabal also found his second wind, scoring 21 goals, after frustrating seasons with Deportivo Cali in his homeland and then Vitoria in Brazil.

Operation...Santana

● Tele Santana, Brazil's coach at the 1982 and 1986 World Cups, has had part of his left leg amputated after blood vessels became obstructed. The 72-year-old, who also has diabetes, was forced into retirement in 1996 after suffering a stroke. Earlier that decade he achieved a notable feat, leading Sao Paulo to two successive Libertadores Cup triumphs – in 1992 and 1993.

Luxemburgo revival

But nobody suffered such dramatic ups and downs as the new champions' coach, Vanderlei Luxemburgo, who was sacked as Brazil boss following the 2000 Olympic team's failure to get past the quarter-finals. His financial affairs then attracted the attention of a Congressional commission of inquiry investigating alleged corruption and mismanagement in Brazilian football.

However, in a country where memories are notoriously short, the storm quickly died down and Luxemburgo quietly set about rebuilding his career at Corinthians and then Palmeiras, before jumping at the chance to join Cruzeiro in August last year.

His new club gave him the autonomy he had yearned, and he quickly set about building his title-winning team. While other clubs were still piecing together their sides, Cruzeiro were racking up a decisive lead. They wrapped up the title with two games to spare after beating Paysandu 2-1.

Luxemburgo has now been reunited with 31-year-old Rivaldo, who played under him at Palmeiras in the mid-1990s and again when Brazil won the Copa America in 1999. Rivaldo's return is a major boost for the domestic game, used to seeing nearly all its leading players depart for wealthier European clubs.

Although critics of the new championship format criticised the early finish as anti-climactic, the action at the other end of the table continued until the last day. Seven teams began it in danger of filling one of the two relegation berths, but although all matches were in theory supposed to kick-off at the same time, the Bahia-Cruzeiro clash actually began more than 20 minutes late as the hosts tried to gain an unfair advantage.

Bahia took the field 10 minutes late, wearing their change strip of all-blue. This – by pure coincidence, of course – just happened to clash with the Cruzeiro kit. So they had to go back into the dressing-rooms and put on their regular white shirts.

Not that the delaying tactics did them much good. Bahia, a bag of nerves, crashed 7-0 and were condemned to the Second Division.

They were joined by Fortaleza, who lost 2-0 to Ponte Preta to go straight back down after only one season in the top flight.

Gremio produced the great escape as they picked up 13 points from their last five matches. The club, who at one stage were six points adrift, ensured their survival with a 3-0 win over Corinthians in their last game. Goals by George, Bruno and Anderson Lima completed their escape, but the game was delayed for six minutes near the end after dozens of jubilant fans invaded the pitch. More ran on after the final whistle, taking the goal nets and fighting with club security officials. "The supporters deserve to go mad," said Gremio president Flavio Obino.

Santos, Sao Paulo, Sao Caetano and Coritiba – placed second to fifth respectively – join Cruzeiro in this year's Libertadores Cup. Sao Paulo, back in the competition for the first time since 1994, duly rewarded coach Roberto Rojas by replacing him with Cuca, from Goias. Rojas, the former Chile goalkeeper banned for life for his part in the Maracana firecracker farce back in 1989, had taken over on an interim basis in May but kept the job after the club failed to find a big-name coach.

Highlights of this year's Dance of the Coaches were provided by Bahia, who employed five on their way to the Second Division, and former Brazil midfielder Junior, who walked out on Corinthians only 10 days after replacing Geninho.

There were also bizarre goings-on at Fluminense, who sacked coach Renato Portaluppi then rehired him 16 matches later after successor Joel Santana was also fired. Santana, who had earlier coached Vitoria, was one of several who suffered the indignity of being fired more than once during the championship.

The most unorthodox approach – at least by Brazilian standards – was taken by Cruzeiro, Santos, Internacional, Coritiba and Ponte Preta. They went through the entire campaign with the same coach.

'Cruzeiro could claim to be Brazil's first legitimate national champions'

Rare sighting...Marcelo Gallardo rejoined River Plate but his season was blighted by injury

Silly season story

Farce was never far away during the opening campaign

ERIC WEIL
in Buenos Aires

THE OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP could truly be said to have been a silly season. It started off with everybody talking about 'galactic' River Plate because they were deemed (largely by the media) to have assembled an especially star-studded team.

In reality, they had sold their top players (notably Martin Demichelis and Andres D'Alessandro) and re-signed a couple of ageing former stars – Marcelo Gallardo and Marcelo Salas, who, as it turned out, spent most of the campaign injured. Soon River Plate, instead of being out of this world, were out of the championship.

The sale of Demichelis severely weakened River's defence, which was further depleted when fan criticism prompted international Nelson Vivas to go into early retirement.

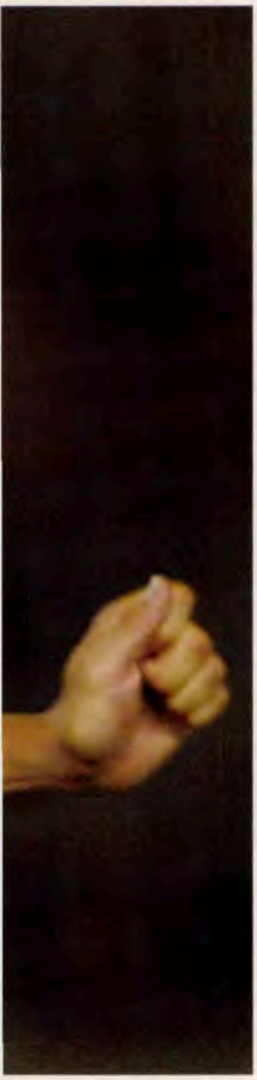
With him out of the way, supporters' anger was directed at coach Manuel Pellegrini, who duly departed with River having taken only 20 points from 17 games.

There were other, equally farcical chapters in the opening story. Take the near-month-long hiatus in the campaign as an investigation into hooliganism was launched. The fact that the championship resumed with the probe ongoing only showed that there was no need to stop it in the first place.

After that came the long-drawn-out battle between the FA and Boca Juniors over the services of Carlos Tevez. The FA wanted him in the national Under-20 side at the World Youth Cup; Boca, for the World Club Cup game against Milan in Yokohama. In the end, Tevez played part of the latter match – which Boca won on penalties after a 1-1 draw – though he might have been of more use to the Under-20s since they bowed out in the semi-finals.

Pellegrini's departure from River highlights yet another comical part of the Argentinian tale – the merry-go-round of coaches. Only nine of the 20 top-flight clubs ended the campaign with the same man at the helm who had started it, with many of the departing coaches simply moving on to another club in the division.

After the season ended four more coaches were hired. River (Leonardo Astrada), Independiente (Jose Pastoriza) and Racing Club



(Ubaldo Fillol) all put former internationals at their helms, while Colon Santa Fe engaged Francisco Maturana, who had recently resigned as Colombia coach.

One of the many departees was Racing Club's Angel Cappa, who said: "The surroundings of soccer here are disgusting. The hysteria of the fans influences the players, who suffer under the pressure. I could never get them to play the good football I wanted. I'm leaving because I am not happy in Argentinian soccer. With so much pressure, so many vested interests and negotiations, the players do not have the required calmness to try to play well."

Mario Gomez, who left Gimnasia y Esgrima de La Plata in October, told a similar story, saying the pressure to change coaches invariably came from the fans, who did not understand a team with a lot of new players and/or a new coach needed time to settle down.

Gomez also blamed fans' pressure for spoiling the quality of football. "It makes players afraid of making mistakes so that, for example, they boot the ball away without direction instead of playing it out of defence," he said. "They would rather wait for rivals to make a mistake than play good soccer themselves."

Argentina's 1986 World Cup-winning coach Carlos Bilardo added: "There are no players with technique here and no new tactics, but I do see more TV cameras all the time. The circus is getting bigger while they play less and less. You need to work harder on technique in the younger divisions."

Gomez, who coached in Europe for five years, pointed out: "They've got the best players in Europe (some of them Argentinians), and there is better teamwork. Here, it is more disorganised and there are too many team changes from one tournament to another.

"In Argentina, they want to do the same things at the speed they play at in Europe, but we haven't got such men as Aimar, Zidane, Totti and Rui Costa, so it's speed without precision. Here, they should think more of pausing, freezing play. The only team that do that are Boca Juniors. That is why they won the championship."

Boca out on their own

Boca were certainly the only real candidates to take the opening title. They led from the start, showed by far the greatest consistency and won far more comfortably than their final three-point margin suggested. Having secured the title with two games to go they fielded reserves in their last matches – a 1-1 draw at home to Olimpo and a 2-1 defeat at Colon.

Boca played their best football in the early part of the season when they fielded three attackers – Tevez, Guillermo Barros Schelotto and Brazilian Iarley. Injuries denied Boca the use of the trio together in later games, while coach Carlos Bianchi was forced to utilise his entire squad in light of the team's hefty fixture schedule (Boca played almost 70 matches in 2003).

San Lorenzo finished second, Banfield third, while Quilmes' fourth place was the best performance by a promoted team since the start of short opening and closing tournaments in 1991. Yet their story is a rare bright note in an otherwise gloomy domestic scene.

Going out in style...Alberto Acosta

● San Lorenzo may have missed out on the opening championship (hardly helped by being victims of dubious refereeing decisions during their 1-0 defeat by Boca), but forward Alberto Acosta at least ended his career on a positive note. The 37-year-old scored his 300th League goal (a penalty) in the 4-1 home win over Velez Sarsfield in his final match before retirement.

The opening campaign was marked by the increasingly familiar occurrence of players threatening to strike over unpaid wages. Some had not received their salaries for as long as five months, and it was strange that only when they actually refused to play did the cash suddenly appear.

That said, many clubs still have huge debts, which are proving hard to reduce even if players are sold. Many players are only part-owned by their clubs and others not at all, so that only part of the transfer fee at best has gone to the club concerned.

Champions Boca are far from immune from financial troubles. Even before the end of the opening tournament, they had sold outstanding midfielder Sebastian Battaglia to Villarreal in Spain.

Five top division clubs are technically bankrupt, with another 25 in the lower divisions in the same position or close to it. Yet, amazingly, virtually bankrupt Second Division side Huracan have 37 professionals on their books – more than such wealthy clubs as Manchester United and Chelsea.

New

MARK GLEESON in Johannesburg

THERE IS A decidedly fresher look to the African Nations Cup finals in Tunisia but it is still likely that old faces will dominate the three-week event.

Three countries – Benin, Rwanda and Zimbabwe – are making their finals debut, while the likes of Guinea and Kenya return to the finals after some time out of the limelight.

Rwanda's qualification is particularly poignant given that less than a decade ago the tiny east African country was embroiled in a brutal genocide.

The presence of the newcomers will attract a lot of interest, but primary focus is again sure to rest on the likes of Cameroon, Nigeria and Senegal, the three favourites for the title.

Hosts Tunisia will be seeking to successfully ride a tidal wave of expectation and optimism as they search for a first Nations Cup triumph, while Egypt and Morocco will hope that playing in the familiar conditions of north Africa works in their favour.

Two other sides who might have been among the contenders – Ivory Coast and Ghana – both failed to qualify.

Without the latter, Cameroon and Egypt both have the opportunity to extend the record of all-time Nations Cup wins to five. The three countries hold the record of four wins each.

Cameroon's Indomitable Lions are also chasing another unique feat, victory at three successive Nations Cups. Their Final triumphs over Nigeria in 2000 in Lagos, and over Senegal in 2002 in Bamako, Mali, both came after penalty shoot-outs. Whether that good fortune continues remains to be seen, but the Lions are certainly among the serious contenders again, even if their team is in transition.

There has been the need for some key changes for coach Winfried Schafer, who has also been hampered by the lack of competitive match practice since Cameroon qualified automatically as holders.

The death of Marc-Vivien Foe, at the Confederations Cup in June, has robbed the side of a midfield engine and puts pressure on Manchester United's Eric Djemba Djemba (pictured, left) to step up and assume a leadership role. Up front, Patrick Mboma is due to return to the side after being ignored for a year. He is expected to rekindle his fruitful partnership with Samuel Eto'o (see profile, overleaf). Defensively, however, the Lions still look a little soft, with concerns over the eccentricity of captain Rigobert Song and the goalkeeping berth.

faces, old favourites

Spotlight on Africa as 16 countries go for glory in Tunisia

Senegal were runners-up at the last event and six months later reached the World Cup quarter-finals, eliminating holders France in the process.

Half of that squad is likely to return, but without the magnetic personality of coach Bruno Metsu, who did much to mould the side into a winning combination.

His successor Guy Stephan comes from the top structures of the French federation but has not been able to get the same spark going. The form of forwards El Hadji Diouf and Henri Camara has been indifferent, while Khalilou Fadiga's absence from the tournament because of a potentially life-threatening heart defect is a major blow.

Obafemi Martins, Fadiga's Internazionale team-mate, is set to be the subject of some dispute with Nigeria, who are desperate to cap the pacy young forward but have so far been blocked by both player and club.

Nigeria also wanted to change their coach in the months leading up to the finals but changed their mind after the choice of Bryan Robson drew much criticism. A face-saving tale about a lack of money for Robson's ambitious plans was concocted to end the proposed deal.

Staying put...Chukwu

Instead, Christian Chukwu stays in charge, but just what cohesion he can forge with a disparate bunch of players remains to be seen.

Coaches and winners

Chukwu is one of three coaches at the tournament who have won the Nations Cup title as a player. He was captain of the victorious Nigerians in 1980; Cecil Jones Attuquayefio, who coaches Benin, was in Ghana's winning team in 1965, when Tunisia first hosted the tournament; and Pierre Kalala, who will be on the technical staff of the Democratic Republic of Congo, scored the winner for the old Congo-Kinshasa in 1968.

Tunisia are hosting the tournament for the third time. The last occasion was exactly 10 years ago when it proved a disaster after they lost the opening match against minnows Mali, sacked their coach and were then eliminated before the second stage.

Tunisian football remains ambitious but tentative, and there is much nervous anticipation ahead of kick-off on January 24 against the unknown Rwanda. Roger Lemerre coaches the side at the 2004 finals and will be able to chase a unique distinction of his own after winning the last European Championship in 2000 with France. Successive continental championship wins on different continents would be a first.

Egypt will have the most experienced side on view, and if schemer Hani Ramzy recovers from injury in time he will be playing at a seventh Nations Cup tournament – equalling the record of Ivorian goalkeeper Alain Gouamene. Mohsen Salah's side is solid, if not awe-inspiring, and could be worth an outside flutter for success.

South Africa take 38-year-old midfielder John Moshoeu to the tournament, but there is no strikeforce of any note and Bafana Bafana will struggle to get out of a tough opening group after trouble over the availability of many of their overseas-based stars.

South Africa are keen for a good showing on the field to bolster their 2010 World Cup bid but this is unlikely to happen without the likes of Shaun Bartlett, Benni McCarthy, Mark Fish and Quinton Fortune.

The finals will be preceded by what is likely to be a bloody contest for the leadership of African football. Confederation president Issa Hayatou is favourite to win this year's election, to be held during CAF Congress in Tunis on January 22, but he is being pushed hard by Ismail Bhamjee, a former close ally. Ever since Bhamjee – South Africa-born but from Botswana – announced his intention to run, Hayatou has been on a flurry of trips across Africa, more in the past six months than in the previous five years. These are obvious re-election trips, although they have been made under the guise of official CAF visits since much of Hayatou's campaign is financed by the confederation rather than his own pocket.

Hayatou, CAF president for the past 14 years, got a warning shot about his position when more than half the African delegates voted for his opponent, Sepp Blatter, in the FIFA presidential election in Seoul in 2002.

● *Mark Gleeson profiles the finalists, group by group, on pages 32-39.*

SCHEDULE

GROUP A
Jan 24: Tunisia v Rwanda (Rades, Tunis, 19:30)
Jan 25: DR Congo v Guinea (El Menzah, Tunis, 14:00)
Jan 28: Guinea v Rwanda (Bizerte, 14:00)
Jan 28: Tunisia v DR Congo (Rades, Tunis, 16:15)
Feb 1: Tunisia v Guinea (Rades, Tunis, 14:00)
Feb 1: DR Congo v Rwanda (Bizerte, 14:00)

GROUP B
Jan 26: Kenya v Mali (Bizerte, 14:00)
Jan 26: Burkina Faso v Senegal (El Menzah, Tunis, 19:00)
Jan 30: Kenya v Senegal (Bizerte, 14:00)
Jan 30: Burkina Faso v Mali (El Menzah, Tunis, 19:00)
Feb 2: Mali v Senegal (El Menzah, Tunis, 14:00)
Feb 2: Burkina Faso v Kenya (Bizerte, 14:00)

GROUP C
Jan 25: Zimbabwe v Egypt (Sfax, 16:30)
Jan 25: Algeria v Cameroon (Sousse, 19:00)
Jan 29: Cameroon v Zimbabwe (Sfax, 16:30)
Jan 29: Algeria v Egypt (Sousse, 19:00)
Feb 3: Cameroon v Egypt (Monastir, 14:00)
Feb 3: Algeria v Zimbabwe (Sousse, 14:00)

GROUP D
Jan 27: Nigeria v Morocco (Monastir, 14:00)
Jan 27: Benin v South Africa (Sfax, 18:00)
Jan 31: Nigeria v South Africa (Monastir, 14:00)
Jan 31: Benin v Morocco (Sfax, 18:00)
Feb 4: Benin v Nigeria (Sfax, 18:00)
Feb 4: Morocco v South Africa (Sousse, 18:00)

QUARTER-FINALS
Feb 7: Gp B winners v Gp A runners-up (El Menzah, Tunis, 15:00) (QF1)
Feb 7: Gp A winners v Gp B runners-up (Rades, Tunis, 17:00) (QF2)
Feb 8: Gp C winners v Gp D runners-up (Monastir, 14:00) (QF3)
Feb 8: Gp D winners v Gp C runners-up (Sfax, 17:00) (QF4)

SEMI-FINALS
Feb 11: QF2 winners v QF3 winners (Rades, Tunis, 16:00)
Feb 11: QF1 winners v QF4 winners (Sousse, 19:00)

THIRD-PLACE PLAY-OFF
Feb 13: Monastir, 14:00

FINAL
Feb 14: Rades, Tunis, 15:00

All times are local

Life after Madrid

Sid Lowe on the Cameroon striker who is favourite to be voted African Footballer of the Year

THERE IS SOMETHING fantastically entertaining, wonderfully spectacular about Real Mallorca and Cameroon striker Samuel Eto'o. On and off the pitch. A cheeky-grinned, refreshingly honest, utterly loveable – if occasionally lunatic – character, he has already packed a lifetime's action into just 22 years.

With a big heart and an even bigger mouth, this is the man who last Christmas got himself a red card for festively booting Barcelona's Thiago Motta up the backside, pantomime-style, who has been attacked on the bench – by his own manager – and who stars in an advert, banned in his home country, wearing nothing but his trainers. Perhaps Eto'o has a thing about shoes. After all, he once stole his agent's pair – a gesture considered a death threat in Cameroon.

But Eto'o is also a magnificent footballer. At 16, he was the youngest player at the 1998 World Cup, he has already played over 50 times for his country and he goes into the African Nations Cup as the star man, favourite to be named African Footballer of the Year.

Despite his age, the Cameroonian has already won two Nations Cups, in 2000 and 2002, a gold medal at the Sydney Olympics in 2000 – when he scored against Spain in the Final – and the Spanish Cup, in 2003.

He secured the latter trophy almost single-handedly with a sumptuous two-goal performance against Recreativo Huelva in the Final. It was the first major silverware in the Balearic club's history; an emotional Eto'o dedicated the victory to his international team-mate Marc-Vivien Foe, who had died on the pitch in Lyon during the Confederations Cup semi-final against Colombia just two days before. Eto'o did not appear in that match, having returned to Spain from France after the group games to play in the Spanish Cup Final. Having inspired Mallorca to victory, he returned to France for the Confederations Cup Final, saying: "I had a friend up there watching the match with God. I did it for him."

That dedication and his willingness to fly back and forth in order to play every single game speak volumes about Eto'o's devotion, enthusiasm and heart.

All-time top scorer

Born in March 1981 in Nkon, a town of just 400 inhabitants 40km from the Cameroon capital Yaounde, Eto'o joined Real Madrid as a 15-year-old. He made his League debut in 1998, but played only 88 minutes in two years, being loaned out to Espanyol, for whom he never actually made an appearance, and Second Division Leganes. In 1999, Mallorca paid £5.5million for him, and, given the backing absent in Madrid, Eto'o quickly became their all-time First Division top scorer, a feat he dedicated to "all those who love me; everyone else can screw themselves!"

Lightning quick, constantly on the move and direct, Eto'o is a devastating striker. His acceleration, surging from deep, beyond the last man or dashing past an opponent before he has even reacted, is second to none. His intelligence of movement makes him almost impossible to pick up, and he creates as many goals as he scores with his awareness and ability to pull defenders out of position.

Eto'o may not be as elegant or graceful as Thierry Henry, nor as bullish as Ronaldo, but he has a bit of both about him. Slim and smooth, but all arms and legs; devastatingly quick, unstoppable on the run.

It was last season, his fourth at Mallorca, that Eto'o really exploded. He hit 14 goals in the League, most spectacularly leaving his mark at the Bernabeu, where Mallorca hammered Real Madrid 5-1. Substituted late on, Eto'o was given a standing ovation by the shellshocked home fans and it was richly deserved. His match-up with Fernando Hierro was always likely to be rather uneven – after all, Eto'o runs like a gazelle, Hierro like a hippo with a stitch – but the Cameroon striker destroyed Madrid's entire back four, including the not-exactly-sluggish Roberto Carlos.

Never was that clearer than in the run-up to Eto'o's own, outrageous strike, full of pace and picaresque cheek. Surrounded by seven white shirts and apparently going nowhere in the penalty area, a sudden, seemingly impossible standing-start surge left Roberto Carlos for dead and the ball was dispatched past Iker Casillas. The Madrid defence's incredulous faces were beamed around the world. "Samuel could achieve as much as David Beckham," said Mallorca's then manager Gregorio Manzano.

No wonder Eto'o was such hot property in the summer, with Liverpool, Chelsea and Valencia all close to signing him. Having started this season in excellent form, the list of admirers grows ever longer, undaunted by the probable £15m fee.

His current manager, Luis Aragones, describes him as the greatest player in Mallorca's history; one of the five best in the world. That's why Manchester United, Barcelona, Juventus, Atletico Madrid and Milan will be keeping a close eye this month.

Meanwhile, Real Madrid, who will earn 50 per cent of any future transfer fee, seem keen to encourage Eto'o to join Arsenal, thus facilitating their bid for Thierry Henry. Some, not unjustly, think they should just buy back Eto'o instead.

The Cameroonian says his time in Mallorca is over and that he fancies the Premiership, telling one newspaper it is "tailor-made" for him. "It's so quick and very attacking," he said. "Very few players give their all on the pitch like I do, and I am capable of playing for any team in the world. I'd have the fans in my pocket after two games."

Confidence? This, after all, is the man who insisted: "I might not be as handsome as David Beckham, but I'm a better footballer."

The thing is, he might be right.

SAMUEL ETO'O will be hot favourite to be named African Footballer of the Year in Tunis the day before the start of the Nations Cup finals. He is one of the five candidates for the 2003 award, which is decided by the Confederation of African Football's media and technical committees.

The four other finalists are Ivorian striker Didier Drogba, Tunisia defender Hatem Trabelsi and the Nigerian duo of Jay-Jay Okocha and Obafemi Martins.

The trophy will be handed over at the African football awards in Yaounde, Cameroon, in April but CAF have decided because of the long delay before the awards ceremony that they will announce the winner in Tunis on January 23.

The Francophone bias in the committees is again reflected by Drogba's inclusion after scoring nine goals in 16 games for Marseille since his move from Guingamp in July, but it is surprising that Shabani Nonda of Monaco did not make the shortlist.

El Hadji Diouf of Liverpool and Senegal, the winner in 2001 and 2002, did not feature in the 2003 poll.

In the frame...Okocha

Premier view...Eto'o is eyeing a move to England

Unready as ever

DR CONGO

FORMERLY KNOWN AS Zaire (and the Leopards), the Democratic Republic of Congo have had an identity change and, these days, are known as the Simbas (lions). But the chaotic nature of their football, particularly the administration and preparations, persists, retarding the chances of the vast country ever living up to its enormous potential.

Just as diamonds are reputed to lie blinking on the ground in the hinterland of the Congo, so quality footballers are in plentiful supply. But although they are often robust, strong and highly motivated, few ever emerge on to a wider stage. One of the main reasons is the growing isolation of the country, whose national team were once the standard-bearers of African football.

DR Congo has been wracked by civil strife and horrible atrocities in recent years. A complete lack of money after decades of corruption means the football federation is totally dependent on the government, whose level of patronage is dependent on the political mood of the day. It is difficult to do any planning or to keep a consistent team and, as on the eve of past Nations Cup finals, the Congolese are again scrambling to get everything ready at the last minute.

Unheralded Englishman Mick Wadsworth was appointed coach just two months before kick-off and new players with Congolese connections sought from the leagues of Europe to bolster the side. But there is no disguising the loss of leading striker Shabani Nonda, to a long-term knee injury. With the Monaco man out, Congo now look to Newcastle's occasional striker Lomana Tresor Lua Lua for goalscoring inspiration.

Tough task...Mick Wadsworth

LIKELY SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS
Pascal Kalemba (AS Vita Club)
Muteba Kidiaba (TP Mazembe Englebert)
Paulin Tokala (InterClube, Ang)

DEFENDERS
Dikilu Bageta (Ajax Cape Town, SAf)
Michel Dinzey (Eintracht Braunschweig, Ger)
Heritea Ilunga (Saint-Etienne, Fra)
Mpetyn Kuzulu (AS Vita Club)
Cyrille Mubiala (Ajax Cape Town, SAf)
Felix Musasa Mwamba (Orlando Pirates, SAf)

MIDFIELDERS
Jean Pierre Kamudimba (Nice, Fra)
Zola Matumona (FC St Eloi Lupopo)
Mbomboko Ngoy (TP Mazembe Englebert)
Tshinyaka Tshiolola (Ajax Cape Town, SAf)

FORWARDS
Lomana Tresor Lua Lua (Newcastle, Eng)
Alain Masudi (Al Ahli, Lby)
Biscotte Mbala (Daring Club Motema Pembe)
Kabamba Musasa (Kaizer Chiefs, SAf)

LIKELY SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS
Moke Doy (Rayon Sports)
Mohamed Mosi (Le Cidade)
Ramazani Nkunzingoma (FC Marine)

DEFENDERS
Remy Bitana (Rayon Sports)
Leandre Bizagwira (Kiyovu Sports)
Lita Mana (APR FC)
Hamad Ndikumana (Gent, Blg)
Elias Ntagumanda (APR FC)

MIDFIELDERS
Joao Elias (Kortrijk, Blg)
Hassan Milly (APR FC)
Edouard Mugisha (Kiyovu Sports)
Benoit Mukoko (FC Marine)
Jean-Paul Nsengiyumva (APR FC)
Eric Nshimiyima (APR FC)
Abdul Sibonana (APR FC)

FORWARDS
Jimmy Gatete (APR FC)
Olivier Karekezi (APR FC)
Jean Lomani (Power Dynamos, Zam)
Pape Mayele (Lokeren, Blg)
Desire Mbonabucya (St Truiden, Blg)
Jimmy Mulisa (APR FC)
Henri Munyaneza (Eendracht Aalst, Blg)

From genocide to glory-hunting

RWANDA

ONLY NINE YEARS after a brutal genocide killed millions in the tiny east African country, Rwanda find themselves among the elite with a surprise finals place. Their shock defeat of four-times winners Ghana in the final qualifier was arguably the biggest upset in Nations Cup history – it ended the almost automatic right of passage of Ghana's Black Stars and sent in their place to the finals a team of unknowns who until a decade ago barely played any international football.

Rwanda's transformation has had much to do with the enthusiastic support for the game of state president Paul Kagame, who has used government money to get the team going. Serb coach Ratomir Djukovic, who formerly worked with the Yugoslav federation, was brought in to develop the side and has surpassed even his own expectations in getting them this far.

The team includes a handful of overseas-based players, mainly in Belgium. St Truiden's Desire Mbonabucya captains the side, while Gent's Hamad Ndikumana is another key player.

The national team's success has done much to heal divisions between the warring Hutu and Tutsi tribes, with Rwandese patriotism now coming to the fore. But the side's credentials will come under a stark spotlight in Tunisia as they attempt to prove that their presence is not a fluke.

Dream leader...Mbonabucya

Hosts feeling the heat

TUNISIA

THERE IS IMMENSE pressure on hosts Tunisia to finally deliver at the Nations Cup finals. Roger Lemerre, the high-profile former France coach, has been roped in to conduct the campaign and the preparation has been a model of professionalism and thoroughness. Lemerre has made many changes during his short reign, but most of them gradual and measured.

Expectation is high given the resources ploughed into the side, but there are doubts about whether they have the depth of talent needed to win an African championship. Also, their group provides a few potentially slippery obstacles – a situation Lemerre will be all too conscious of after overseeing France's disastrous first-round exit at the last World Cup.

The coach has already told Tunisians not to expect a comfortable ride in the group stage. "This is not an easy one, and particularly the opening match [against Rwanda]," he said. "I remember what happened to France in the opening game of the 2002 World Cup when they were supposedly up against minnows. We must take all our opponents very seriously. The most important thing is to go into this tournament at the highest level of performance and leave nothing to chance."

As Ajax defender Hatem Trabelsi battles to be fit after a knee injury, the burden of creativity rests on the slender shoulders of Slim Benachour, who is far from a regular with Paris Saint-Germain. A late bid to bestow Tunisian nationality on Brazilian striker Francileudo dos Santos, formerly at Etoile Sahel and now with Sochaux in France, attests to the desperate need for a matchwinner. Santos spent two years in Tunisia and has accepted the passport but also stated he still dreams of a chance to play for his native Brazil. He was still vacillating on his international future with just a couple of weeks to go to the Nations Cup.

LIKELY SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS
Khaled Azaiez (Club Africain)
Ali Boumnijel (Rouen, Fra)
Khaled Fadhel (CS Sfaxien)

DEFENDERS
Anis Ayari (Stade Tunisien)
Khaled Badra (Esperance)
Radhouane Bouzaiane (Club Africain)
Clayton (Esperance)
Radhi Jaidi (Esperance)
Hatem Trabelsi (Ajax, Hol)
Alaeddine Yahya (Guingamp, Fra)

MIDFIELDERS
Slim Benachour (Paris Saint-Germain, Fra)
Riadh Bouazizi (Gaziantepspor, Tur)
Adel Chedli (Sochaux, Fra)
Kaies Ghodhbane (Diyarbakirspor, Tur)
Mourad Melki (Esperance)
Joahar Mnari (Esperance)
Mehdi Nafti (Racing Santander, Spa)
Walid Seghayer (Stade Tunisien)

FORWARDS
Najeh Braham (Eintracht Trier, Ger)
Ziad Jaziri (Gaziantepspor, Tur)
Imed Mhadhebi (CS Sfaxien)
Ali Zitouni (Esperance)

Driving force...Slim Benachour

Eyes on last eight

GUINEA

IN THE MID-1970S, Guinea were one of the powerhouses of African football, providing the Champions Cup winners and reaching the Final of the 1976 Nations Cup. Their time at the top did not last long, however, and now their profile is a lot more low-key.

There is still plenty of talent, though, and the 'Syli Nationale' topped qualifying Group 2. Coached by Frenchman Michel Dussuyer, they will fancy their chances to get through the group stage in Tunisia.

Guinea should also have been at the 2002 finals in Mali and could well have qualified for the 2002 World Cup ahead of South Africa had it not been for the disastrous meddling of the then sports minister in federation affairs. The sacking of the soccer hierarchy led to threats of suspension by FIFA, and when the minister refused to reinstate them, the country was expelled from the World Cup and Nations Cup qualifiers.

LIKELY SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS
Aboubakar Bangoura (ASFAG)
Kemoko Camara
Saliou Diallo (Diyarbakirspor, Tur)

DEFENDERS
Schuman Bah (Metz, Fra)
Bobo Balde (Celtic, Sco)
Ibrahim Sory Conte (Lokeren, Blg)
Morlaye Soumah (Bastia, Fra)
Kanfory Sylla (Charleroi, Blg)
Pablo Thiam (Wolfsburg, Ger)

MIDFIELDERS
Mange Camara (AS Kaloum)
Pascal Feindouno (Bordeaux, Fra)
Abdoul Sow
Abdoulaye Kapi Sylla (Tours, Fra)
Mohamed Sylla (Celtic, Sco)
Ibrahima Yattara (Trabzonspor, Tur)

FORWARDS
Sambegou Bangoura (Standard Liege, Blg)
Aboubacar Titi Camara
Abdoulkarim Fofana (AS Kaloum)
Fode Mansare (Montpellier, Fra)
Souleymane Oulare (Al Jazeera, UAE)
Souleymane Youla (Genclerbirligi, Tur)

Tough guy Stambouli makes his mark

MALI

MALI'S PROGRESS TO the last Nations Cup semi-finals had much to do with their hosting of the event, but they again have the ability to reach the knockout phase.

There have been two coaching changes since Mali finished fourth in 2002, but most of the best players, including Ajaccio striker Mamadou Bagayoko, are still around, augmented by new talent discovered as part of the Diaspora in France. Tottenham's French striker Frederic Kanoute has also said he wants to play for the country of his father's birth, causing a row with his club, desperate for him to stay to help their battle to avoid relegation.

Henryk Kasperczak took over as coach a month before the last finals but returned to Poland after the tournament. Now Mali have pulled the rug from under the feet of his successor, Frenchman Christian Dalger, and replaced him with compatriot Henri Stambouli, again shortly before the finals get under way.

Dalger steered Mali through the qualifiers as Group 6 winners. But the federation believed he was too soft and did not command his players' respect.

Stambouli, no stranger to the African coaching circuit, was appointed after Dalger's August dismissal and has already been ruffling feathers. He suspended three key players for alleged indiscipline before a World Cup preliminary tie against Guinea-Bissau in November. The strong-arm tactic was no doubt a bid to weaken player power and inject some discipline before the trip to Tunisia.

Whether it works remains to be seen, but Mali can take comfort from their remarkable Nations Cup record. They have reached at least the semi-finals in all their three previous finals appearances – 1972, 1994 and 2002.

Back for more...Mamadou Bagayoko

LIKELY SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS
Cheikh Oumar Bathily (Djoliba)
Mahamadou Sidibe (Aigaleo, Gre)

DEFENDERS
Adama Coulibaly (Lens, Fra)
Souleymane Diamoutene (Perugia, Ita)
Boubacar Diarra (Freiburg, Ger)
Cedric Kante (Strasbourg, Fra)
Ibrahim Thiam (Istres, Fra)
Mamary Traore (Grenoble, Fra)
Sammy Traore (Nice, Fra)

MIDFIELDERS
David Coulibaly (Chateauroux, Fra)
Mamadou Diallo (CF Salif Keita)
Mahamadou Diarra (Lyon, Fra)
Seydou Keita (Lens, Fra)
Oumar Kida (CF Salif Keita)
Djibril Sidibe (Chateauroux, Fra)
Mohamed Lamine Sissoko (Valencia, Spa)
Bassala Toure (Panionios, Gre)

FORWARDS
Mamadou Bagayoko (Ajaccio, Fra)
Dramane Coulibaly (Laval, Fra)
Soumailia Coulibaly (Freiburg, Ger)
Mamady Sidibe (Gillingham, Eng)
Dramane Traore (Ismaili, Egy)

LIKELY SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS
Duncan Ochieng (Mathare United)
William Ochieng (Mumias Sugar)
Francis Onyiso (Ulinzi)

DEFENDERS
Issa Kassim (Mumias Sugar)
Anthony Mathenge (Thika)
Phillip Opiyo (Tusker FC)
Musa Otieno (Santos, SAf)
Adam Shaban (Mathare United)
Japheth Waweru (Tusker FC)

MIDFIELDERS
Tom Juma (Frisk Viljor, Swe)
Titus Malama (Mathare United)
Robert Mambo (Gent, Blg)
John Mururi (Gent, Blg)
Evans Nyabaro (IK Sleipner, Swe)
Walter Odede (Mathare United)
Dennis Oliech (Al Arabi, Qat)

FORWARDS
John Baraza (FK Sylva, Swe)
Francis Chinjili (St George, Eth)
Bonaventure Maruti (Orebro, Swe)
Paul Oguya (Orebro, Swe)
Mike Okoth (Heusden-Zolder, Blg)
Maurice Sunguti (Frisk Viljor, Swe)

Fine despite the fighting

KENYA

THE HARAMBEE STARS bring east Africa back into the continental footballing mainstream for the first time since 1992, when Kenya last made an African Nations Cup appearance. Inspirational coach Jacob Mulee oversaw an impressive qualifying campaign, having built on the foundations laid by predecessor Reinhard Fabisch.

The fact Kenya topped their group, ahead of Togo, is even more impressive given the off-field fighting and back-stabbing that the team had to contend with as government and federation clashed. The repeated spats threatened to derail the national team's qualifying campaign, with the situation worsening after the withdrawal of their sponsors at the end of 2002. They were disgusted by a lack of accountability and transparency within the federation, who were then hit even harder when the taxman came looking for past dues and froze the accounts. Embarrassingly, this meant players had to vacate a training camp organised to get them ready for key qualifying matches.

Mulee has also clashed with the federation over the issue of overseas players. The coach accused his bosses of dragging their feet in calling up players based in Europe, such as Sweden-based midfielder Tom Juma.

Nevertheless, most of them will be on hand for the Nations Cup, with a comeback pencilled in for veteran Mike Okoth, who plays in Belgium and for years was the flag-bearer of Kenyan footballers overseas.

Defender Musa Otieno, who plays for Santos in South Africa, will captain the team and is very much the leader, contributing the odd goal on his forays forward for set-pieces.

Delayed call-up...Tom Juma

Fadiga blow casts shadow

SENEGAL

WHEN SENEGAL TAKE to the pitch at the Nations Cup finals, it will be 18 months since their heady displays at the 2002 World Cup finals. That period has been far from comfortable for the 'Lions of Teranga'.

Firstly, new coach Guy Stephan has been unable to emerge from the shadow of his messianic predecessor, fellow Frenchman Bruno Metsu, who led the team to the quarter-finals in Korea/Japan and whose rock 'n' roll appearance came to symbolise the unconventional element of the Senegalese game.

Stephan has struggled to get results since taking over, although qualification for the finals was markedly easy, with opponents Gambia and Lesotho never posing a threat. Then there has been the polemic over the condition of the inspirational Khalilou Fadiga, who was the real driving force behind the side's success in the last Nations Cup – when they were beaten only on penalties by Cameroon in the Final – and at the World Cup. At the time of the midfielder's transfer from Auxerre to Internazionale before the start of this season, doctors detected a heart defect that threatens to kill him if he plays again. The news brought a sudden halt to Fadiga's career and has left his future uncertain as he seeks a remedy in the same way Nwankwo Kanu of Nigeria was able to overcome a similar complaint. To add to Senegal's troubles, England-based players El Hadji Diouf, Salif Diao and Henri Camara have all been struggling to find form with their respective clubs.

Long gone is Senegal's surprise element, especially since the core of the World Cup side is still in place. But there is the talent to ensure the country keep their status among the continent's elite.

Struggling for form...El Hadji Diouf

LIKELY SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS
Oumar Diallo (Diaraf Dakar)
Tony Sylva (Monaco, Fra)

DEFENDERS
Habib Beye (Marseille, Fra)
Ferdinand Coly (Perugia, Ita)
Lamine Diatta (Rennes, Fra)
Souleymane Diawara (Sochaux, Fra)
Pape Malick Diop (Lorient, Fra)
Ibrahima Faye (Gent, Blg)
Baye Ali Ibra Kebe (Moscow Spartak, Rus)
Mamadou Seck (Ajaccio, Fra)

MIDFIELDERS
Allou Cisse (Birmingham, Eng)
Salif Diao (Liverpool, Eng)
Pape Bouba Diop (Lens, Fra)
Amdy Faye (Portsmouth, Eng)
Kader Mangane (Neuchatel Xamax, Swi)
Sylvain N'Diaye (Marseille, Fra)
Pape Sarr (Lens, Fra)

FORWARDS
Henri Camara (Wolverhampton, Eng)
El Hadji Diouf (Liverpool, Eng)
Diomansy Kamara (Modena, Ita)
Frederic Mendy (Saint-Etienne, Fra)
Mamadou Niang (Strasbourg, Fra)

Stallions ride again

BURKINA FASO

BURKINA FASO, once unable to even put together a side for Nations Cup qualifiers, are now participating in their fifth successive finals. Only once have they been able to get past the first round, however, in 1998, when as hosts they rode a tidal wave of support.

The era of Philippe Troussier with *Les Etalons* (The Stallions) remains the glory period of Burkinabe football. Now it seeks charisma from a host of exciting newcomers.

French coach Jean Paul Rabier is confident his side can qualify from their group – and the volatile political situation in neighbouring Ivory Coast is also helping. The Ivorians, who once welcomed mass migration, now seek to alienate their neighbours along ethnic and racial lines. So many Ivorian players with Burkinabe roots are inclined to declare loyalty to Burkina Faso. Among those is Belgium-based Pascal Guel, ironically the brother of Ivory Coast captain Tchiressoua Guel.

LIKELY SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS
Daouda Compaore (ASFA Yennenga)
Abdoulaye Salama (ASF Bobo-Dioulasso)

DEFENDERS
Ali Mohamed Diallo (ASFA Yennenga)
Madou Dossama (Etoile Filante)
Ibrahim Kano (Etoile Filante)
Amara Ouattara (RC Kourigba)
Tidiane Amadou Tall (Etoile Filante)
Mamadou Talle (Bursaspor, Tur)
Amadou Toure (Mons, Blg)
Lamine Traore (Anderlecht, Blg)

MIDFIELDERS
Abdoulaye Cisse (Montpellier, Fra)
Amadou Coulibaly (Racing Bobo-Dioulasso)
Mahamoudou Kere (Charleroi, Blg)
Rahim Ouedraogo (Twente, Hol)
Mady Panandetiguiri (Bordeaux, Fra)
Dusmane Traore (Lorient, Fra)
Patrick Zoundi (Lokeren, Blg)

FORWARDS
Moumouni Dagano (Guingamp, Fra)
Moussa Kabore (FC Pocholit)
Moussa Toure (Mons, Blg)

Counting on experience

EGYPT

NO SIDE CAN match Egypt's African Nations Cup finals record. They have won it four times, the same number as Cameroon and Ghana, but this is the north Africans' 19th tournament appearance, the most of any country. Not only that, but it would be fair to say Egypt have had a real chance of winning the Cup every time they have qualified.

The last of their four triumphs came in 1998 but five players from that success are still around for yet another crack at the silverware. There are even four from the squad that reached the quarter-finals in 1996, making this side the oldest and most experienced assembled for a Nations Cup. But there will be a new face at the helm, Mohsen Salah having replaced the legendary Mahmoud Al-Gohari after Mali 2002.

Salah has kept faith with the old guard but will look to 20-year-old forward Ahmed 'Mido' Hossam for inspiration. His attacking colleagues also help to lower the side's average age – 24-year-old Abdelhalim Ali impressed in Zamalek's run to the 2002 African Champions League title; Ahmed Belal, 23, plays for Cairo rivals Al Ahly.

The Egyptians bounced back with 13 goals in their last two qualifiers after a shock defeat by Madagascar in the opening game. But preparations have been overshadowed by a major crisis at Al Ahly, who have always provided the bulk of the national team. Usually so dominant in domestic competition, they had lost four League games out of 10 at the turn of the year.

On we go...Egypt's Barakat goes clear in a qualifier v Mauritius

LIKELY SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS
Abdelwahed El-Sayed (Zamalek)
Nader El-Sayed (Al Ittihad)
Essam Mahmoud (ENNPI)

DEFENDERS
Mehdat Abdelhadi (Zamalek)
Bechir Al-Tabei (Zamalek)
Amr Desouki (Ankaragucu, Tur)
Emad El-Nahhas (Ismaili)
Wael El-Quabbani (Zamalek)
Abdelzaher El-Saqqa (Genclerbirligi, Tur)
Tarek El-Sayed (Zamalek)
Hady Khashaba (Al Ahly)

MIDFIELDERS
Sayed Abdelhafiz (Al Ahly)
Tamer Abdelhamid (Zamalek)
Mohamed Barakat (Al Arabi, Qat)
Hazem Emam (Zamalek)
Ahmed Hassan (Besiktas, Tur)
Tarek Said (Zamalek)

FORWARDS
Abdelhalim Ali (Zamalek)
Ahmed Belal (Al Ahly)
Ahmed Hossam (Marseille, Fra)
Sameh Youssef (Zamalek)

LIKELY SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS
Lounes Gouaoui (JS Kabylie)
Mohamed Hichem Mezair (USM Alger)
Nassim Ouerrir (RC Kouba)

DEFENDERS
Salim Aribi (USM Alger)
Tarek Ghoul (USM Alger)
Moulay Haddou (Mouloudia Oran)
Slimane Raho (JS Kabylie)
Yacine Slatni (Chabab Belouizdad)
Brahim Zafour (JS Kabylie)
Samir Zaoui (ASO Chlef)

MIDFIELDERS
Hocine Achiou (USM Alger)
Abdelmalek Cherrad (Nice, Fra)
Karim Ghazi (USM Alger)
Nasredine Kraouche (Gent, Blg)
Maamar Mamouni (La Louviere, Blg)
Yazid Mansouri (Coventry, Eng)
Rafik Saifi (Troyes, Fra)
Karim Ziani (Troyes, Fra)

FORWARDS
Nassim Akrour (Troyes, Fra)
Mansour Boutabout (Gueugnon, Fra)
Bouabdellah Daoud (Mouloudia Oran)
Fares Felklahi (Entente Setif)

Fading force look abroad

ALGERIA

IT IS ONE of the great ironies of world football that when Algeria played France in a friendly in Paris just over two years ago, there were more France-born players in the Algerian side than that of the host nation.

Algeria is one of several African countries actively seeking out players born in Europe to African families to take advantage of the better coaching and footballing infrastructures that the players have been exposed to.

For Algeria, too, it is a desperate attempt to regain past glories, as domestic soccer continues to suffer because of the depressed conditions in the country.

That said, Rabah Saadane, back for a second spell as coach, is less inclined to ignore local talent than his predecessor, Rabah Madjer, who coached the team at the last Nations Cup finals.

For Algeria a balanced team selection is likely to be the most effective. But even then there are doubts about whether the squad has enough strength in depth to get through their tough group.

The north Africans, winners of the Nations Cup as hosts in 1990, may have qualified for the finals for the 12th time in 13 attempts. But their qualifying opponents, Chad and Namibia, hardly presented taxing opposition. In fact, Algeria's image as a force to be reckoned with has progressively diminished during the 14 years since their only triumph.

France-born v France...Mansouri

Aiming for high five

CAMEROON

CAMEROON ARE SEEKING an unprecedented fifth Nations Cup title to verify in the record books what is already commonly agreed – that they are the continent's No 1 team.

The Indomitable Lions have been the bright image of African football ever since Roger Milla twisted and turned like Elvis Presley and threatened the dignity of the corner flags at the 1990 World Cup finals. The team's colourful kit, flowing dreadlocks, cavalier defence and pacy attack make them eminently watchable. Nowadays, there is also a haughty arrogance about them, fuelled by a strong self-belief and a refusal to be intimidated by the major powers of world football.

Yet it has been a difficult year for the Cameroonians following the death of key midfielder Marc-Vivien Foe in June and also because of their lack of competitive action – they automatically qualified for these finals as holders. The Indomitable Lions did reach the Confederations Cup Final in France, but otherwise have been limited to a series of friendly matches and training camps in Germany under coach Winfried Schafer.

In Tunisia, the team will be without Lauren Etame-Mayer, the Arsenal utility player, who has brought a premature end to his international career. Other former stalwarts such as Raymond Kalla and Pierre Wome are also likely to be missing. On the plus side, experienced striker Patrick Mboma, a former African Footballer of the Year, was recently reinstated in the side and is likely to resume his potent partnership with Mallorca's Samuel Eto'o.

LIKELY SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS
William Andem (Boavista, Por)
Andre Eboue (Beaucaire, Fra)
Carlos Idriss Kameni (Le Havre, Fra)

DEFENDERS
Timothee Atouba (Basle, Swi)
Gustave Bahoken (Livingston, Sco)
Lucien Mettomo (Kaiserslautern, Ger)
Pierre Njanka (Sedan, Fra)
Jean-Joel Perrier Doumbe (Auxerre, Fra)
Rigobert Song (Lens, Fra)
Bill Tchato (Kaiserslautern, Ger)

MIDFIELDERS
Hugues Ateba (Nantes, Fra)
Eric Djemba Djemba (Manchester United, Eng)
Joel Epalle (Panathinaikos, Gre)
Modeste Mbami (Paris Saint-Germain, Fra)
Falami Ngassam (Steaua Bucharest, Rom)
Geremi Njitap (Chelsea, Eng)
Salomon Olembe (Leeds, Eng)

FORWARDS
Achille Emana (Toulouse, Fra)
Samuel Eto'o (Mallorca, Spa)
Mohamadou Idrissou (Hannover, Ger)
Patrick Mboma
Patrick Suffo (Coventry, Eng)

Potent force...Samuel Eto'o and Patrick Mboma

Finalists – at last

ZIMBABWE

ZIMBABWE'S ABILITY TO snatch defeat from the jaws of victory in the Nations Cup qualifying campaign has been well documented. Ironically, as the country teeters on the brink of economic and political collapse, its national team have finally come good, qualifying for their first Nations Cup finals.

Even then they only sealed their place as best group runners-up after a stuttering campaign during which they were beaten by tiny Seychelles.

Administrative turmoil, finally resolved with new FA presidential elections on November 29, has also made life difficult for coach Sunday Marimo. But the side are buoyant after annexing the COSAFA Castle Cup, beating Malawi in the Final.

All this despite the fact that the players have not been paid promised bonuses and match fees for months.

Stout defence and Peter Ndlovu's huge influence up front will be key to their hopes in Tunisia.

LIKELY SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS
Tapuwa Kapini (Highlanders)
Energy Murambadoro (CAPS United)

DEFENDERS
Dazzy Kapenya (Sporting Lions)
Zvenyika Makonese (Shabanie Mine)
George Mbwando (Alemania Aachen, Ger)
Dumisani Mpofu (Umtata Bush Bucks, SAf)
Bhekithemba Ndlovu (Highlanders)
Kaitano Tembo (SuperSport United, SAf)

MIDFIELDERS
Richard Choruma (Highlanders)
Leo Kurauzione (Dynamos)
Eddie Mashiri (Dynamos)
Lazarus Muhoni (Black Rhinos)
Tinashe Nengomasha (Kaizer Chiefs, SAf)
Esrom Nyandoro (AmaZulu)
Ronald Sibanda (AmaZulu)
Charles Yohane (Wits University, SAf)

FORWARDS
Alois Bunjira (Wits University, SAf)
Wilfred Mugeyi (Ajax Cape Town, SAf)
Benjani Mwaruwari (Auxerre, Fra)
Adam Ndlovu (Dynamos, SAf)
Peter Ndlovu (Sheffield United, Eng)
Agent Sawu (Dynamos)

A tournament too soon?

MOROCCO

THERE IS NOT much ambition around the current Morocco side, with coach Badou Ezaki preferring to talk about building a team capable of winning a place at the 2006 World Cup.

His new-look side is drawn from all over Europe, where Ezaki has spent much time seeking out new players. This emphasis on second-generation Moroccans born abroad has brought the coach much criticism at home, where fans are angry at his exclusion of locally-based players. Notable among these is Hicham Aboucherouane of Raja Casablanca, who was named the best player of the 2002 African Champions League.

Morocco made light work of their easy qualifying group – they faced Sierra Leone, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea – dropping only two points from their six games and without conceding a single goal. But Ezaki has since changed his first-choice goalkeeper, bringing back Khalid Fouhami, who plays in Portugal, in place of Russia-based Abdelilah Bagui in one of many selection surprises that have drawn criticism from the Moroccan press.

Cut above...Morocco (green) made light work of Gabon

The coach's response has been to go on to the attack. "I'm profoundly hurt. Even when we achieve a good result, certain journalists do not want to give praise where it is due," said Ezaki after a 1-0 defeat by Mali in a friendly in Casablanca in November. "This is a very young team and it needs all the encouragement it can get. I'm completely calm. The national team is looking good. We want the public to encourage us, not to be fed a diet of insults."

It is against this backdrop that the Moroccans approach a tough group with Nigeria and South Africa.

LIKELY SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS
Abdelilah Bagui (Moscow Spartak, Rus)
Khalid Fouhami (Academica, Por)
Nadir Lamyaghri (Wydad Casablanca)

DEFENDERS
Jamal Alioui (Perugia, Ita)
Tarek Chibab (Zurich, Swi)
Talal El-Karkouri (Paris Saint-Germain, Fra)
Abdelilah Fahmi (Strasbourg, Fra)
Noureddine Naybet (Deportivo La Coruna, Spa)
Abdesslam Ouaddou (Rennes, Fra)
Akram Romani (Genk, Blg)

MIDFIELDERS
Ali El-Omari (Boavista, Por)
Youssouf Hadji (Bastia, Fra)
Houcine Kharja (Ternana, Ita)
Abdelkrim Kissi (Rubin Kazan, Rus)
Oualid Regragui (Ajaccio, Fra)
Youssef Safri (Coventry, Eng)
Mohamed Yacoobi (Osasuna, Spa)

FORWARDS
Nabil Baha (Naval de Maio, Por)
Marouane Chamakh (Bordeaux, Fra)
Mourad Hdioued (Litex Lovech, Bul)
Rachid Rokki (Al Khor, Qat)
Jaoud Zairi (Sochaux, Fra)

SQUAD

(announced early December)

GOALKEEPERS
Andre Arendse (Mamelodi Sundowns)
Emile Baron (Lillestrom, Nor)
Wayne Roberts (Wits University)

DEFENDERS
Tony Coyle (Rostov, Rus)
David Kannemeyer (Kaizer Chiefs)
Jacob Lekgetho (Lokomotiv Moscow, Rus)
Mbulelo Mabizela (Tottenham, Eng)
Aaron Mokoena (Genk, Blg)
Thabang Molefe (Le Mans, Fra)
Nasief Morris (Panathinaikos, Gre)

MIDFIELDERS
Delron Buckley (Bochum, Ger)
Stanton Fredericks (Kaizer Chiefs)
Benson Mhlongo (Wits University)
Bennett Mnguni (Rostov, Rus)
John Moshoeu (Kaizer Chiefs)
Steven Pienaar (Ajax, Hol)
Jabu Pule (Kaizer Chiefs)
MacBeth Sibaya (Rubin Kazan, Rus)
Sibusiso Zuma (FC Copenhagen, Den)

FORWARDS
George Koumantarakis (Preston, Eng)
Patrick Mayo (Kaizer Chiefs)
Siyabonga Nomvete (Udinese, Ita)

Big guns go missing

SOUTH AFRICA

THE CLUB VERSUS country battle has led to a major rupture in South Africa's plans ahead of the finals. Four key players – Mark Fish, Shaun Bartlett, Quinton Fortune and Benni McCarthy, with more than 200 caps and 50 goals between them – will be missing from the tournament unless there is a last-minute change of heart by the authorities. Coach Ephraim Mashaba, backed by the federation, had insisted on players attending a pre-finals training camp, prompting Fish to withdraw from the squad. Fortune has had no contact with the FA since April, while Bartlett and McCarthy both announced their international retirements last year.

Mashaba's uncompromising attitude is either fully justified or pig-headedly stubborn, depending on which side of the debate you are on. Whatever, the absence of such important players leaves Bafana Bafana threadbare for a tournament in which they seek to gain some psychological advantage over the likes of Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, their opponents in the bid for the 2010 World Cup finals.

Their chances of victory have been reduced further by a lack of strikers. The team are so desperate for firepower that they have recalled George Koumantarakis of English First Division side Preston, for whom he did not play a single League game during the first half of this season after a slow comeback from a long-standing injury.

The side's quality is supplied by Sibusiso Zuma of FC Copenhagen and Ajax Amsterdam's Steven Pienaar, whose chance to run the midfield is eagerly anticipated by many.

Quality player...Sibusiso Zuma

Jay-Jay eyes repeat of '94

NIGERIA

NIGERIA WILL AGAIN be among the favourites to win the tournament, meaning they go into the finals under enormous pressure to succeed. The team have also had to contend with a long period without competitive games – Nigeria booked their finals place in early June last year, a month before most other qualifiers, and were given a bye in the World Cup preliminaries – inconsistent team selection, and uncertainty over the coaching position. Christian Chukwu remains in the hot seat, but only after having fought long and hard to stay there.

But for all that, the Super Eagles have undoubted talent in their squad and can be relied upon to again make a strong impression at the tournament. Jay-Jay Okocha is again expected to lead the pack in Tunisia, the country where he first emerged as an international star a decade ago. Okocha is the only remaining member of the Nigeria side that won the Nations Cup in Tunisia in 1994, the last time the Super Eagles were on the winners' podium.

Just who will join the Bolton Wanderers man in the Nigeria squad has been the subject of intense speculation. But among those almost certain to go are imposing centre-back Joseph Yobo, formerly of Marseille and now with struggling Everton in England; highly-rated winger Uche Kalu, being sought by Ajax, and the likes of Julius Aghahowa and Yakubu Aiyegbeni up front. Right-sided forward John Utaka, currently with Lens, is another exciting option for the Eagles. There is also supposed to be a return to the team for Chelsea full-back Celestine Babayaro, who has not played for his country since last year's World Cup finals.

Nigeria's disappointing performance in Korea/Japan is an added spur for success in Tunisia, but there are several key positions where the side remains a little vulnerable.

Imposing figure...Joseph Yobo

LIKELY SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS
Austin Ejide (Etoile Sahel, Tun)
Vincent Enyeama (Enyimba)
Sunday Rotimi (Sunshine Stars)

DEFENDERS
George Abbey (Macclesfield, Eng)
Rabiu Afolabi (Standard Liege, Blg)
Celestine Babayaro (Chelsea, Eng)
Joseph Enakarhire (Standard Liege, Blg)
Isaac Okoronkwo (Wolverhampton, Eng)
Ifeanyi Udeze (PAOK Salonika, Gre)
Joseph Yobo (Everton, Eng)

MIDFIELDERS
Ikpe Ekong (Reggina, Ita)
Uche Kalu (Wisla Krakow, Pol)
Christian Obodo (Perugia, Ita)
Pascal Ojigwe (Borussia Monchengladbach, Ger)
Jay-Jay Okocha (Bolton, Eng)
Seyi Olofinjana (Brann Bergen, Nor)

FORWARDS
Victor Agali (Schalke, Ger)
Julius Aghahowa (Shakhtar Donetsk, Ukr)
Yakubu Aiyegbeni (Portsmouth, Eng)
Nwankwo Kanu (Arsenal, Eng)
Obafemi Martins (Internazionale, Ita)
John Utaka (Lens, Fra)

Squirrels on the climb

BENIN

AS NATIONS CUP debutants, Benin might be viewed as the whipping boys of a group also containing three former winners. But *Les Ecureuils* (The Squirrels) have proven an ambitious outfit over the past two years.

Benin finished top of their qualifying group after beating Zambia, regular Nations Cup finals presences, 3-0 in their last match. This achievement was all the more impressive given that they had gone through a coaching change mid-campaign. Belgian Rene Taelman, who few in the squad took too seriously, was removed and replaced by Ghana's Cecil Jones Attuquayefio, no stranger to success in Africa.

The scoring form of Oumar Tchomogo proved the catalyst for Benin's improved performances – just three years ago they were hammered 8-2 by Namibia in the qualifiers for the 2002 finals – and the discovery of a host of new expatriate players also boosted their cause.

LIKELY SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS
Maxime Agueh (Valence, Fra)
Rachad Chitou (Dragons l'Oueme)

DEFENDERS
Anicet Adjamonsi (Bordeaux, Fra)
Moustapha Agnide (Lorient, Fra)
Damien Chrysostome (Padova, Ita)
Sylvain Remy (Clermont Foot, Fra)
Felicien Singbo (Lorient, Fra)
Stanislas Toklomety (Postel 2000)

MIDFIELDERS
Jocelyn Ahoueya (Mogas '90)
Rodrigue Akpakoum (La Roche sur Yvon, Fra)
Moussa Latoundji (Energie Cottbus, Ger)
Marcel Noumon (Enyimba, Nig)
Muri Ogunbiyi (Enyimba, Nig)
Jonas Oketola (Dragons l'Oueme)
Wasiu Oladipupo (JS Penere)

FORWARDS
Nasser Adechokan (Toulouse, Fra)
Laurent Djaffo (unattached)
Alain Gaspoz (Aarau, Swi)
Kabirou Moussoro (Pau, Fra)
Oumar Tchomogo (Guingamp, Fra)

1954 UEFA 50 years 2004

Memories of a master

In the first of a special series to mark UEFA's golden jubilee, Alfredo Di Stefano looks back at the early days of the European Cup

WHEN THE EUROPEAN CUP started, how did the players see it? How did they think it would turn out?

ALFREDO DI STEFANO: We thought it was going to be something like the Latin Cup, perhaps a bit better, but not much. It's incredible how the European Cup just got bigger and bigger until it ended up being what it is today – luckily for football.

Real Madrid played a key part in the launch and the boom of the early tournament.

Well, we were really just another club, one of those taking part from the start. But as time went by, it's true we became one of the teams that really helped galvanise the tournament – although of course there were other very important clubs, too.

The five consecutive victories blazed a trail, something that has never been equalled. What did it take to achieve it?

It was complicated, and it was hard, very hard. It needed a bit of everything. But as soon as you win one Cup, you want another.

But without this will to win, you probably would never have won those five consecutive Cups?

Of course. You get sucked into a whirlpool of wanting everything. But at the same time, you must always remember that nobody is going to make things easy for you.

Let's talk about the first European Cup, 1955-56. Your first round tie was easy: 2-0 against Servette in Geneva, and then 5-0 in the return game at the old Chamartin stadium. No problem.

Servette were admittedly not one of the best teams in Europe, but that doesn't mean we didn't have to work hard to win. In Geneva, we didn't score until the 79th minute, through Munoz, and then Gento got the other goal in the last minute.

And you scored your first two European goals in the return.

Yes, and we managed to win that game fairly easily. Everything seemed to go our way.

Then came the difficult part. You won 4-0 against Partizan at home, but lost 3-0 in Belgrade. The legend nearly got cut short there and then.

It was an incredible match in Belgrade. We had to play in snow and ice and to make it worse Milutinovic scored a very early goal. We were under tremendous pressure but we battled through.

Which was the toughest match of all those early campaigns?

The third Final [1957-58], when we stole it from Milan. They had players like Maldini, Bergamaschi, Radice, Danova, Liedholm, Schiaffino, Grillo, Cucchiaroni...some team! We were never in front until we actually won it, which didn't happen

until extra-time, when Gento got the winner. Schiaffino had scored the first after 69 minutes, I equalised after 75, Milan took the lead again through Grillo after 78 and Rial equalised again a minute later. Three goals in four minutes! I tell you, it was really hard going, the toughest test of all.

There must have been other matches that were almost as demanding.

Oh yes. The game against Partizan, for instance, or against Rapid Wien [in 1956-57]. They had a formidable team, with Zeman in goal, Happel in the centre of defence, Hanappi in midfield and the Korner brothers leading the attack. We won the first game 4-2 in Madrid, but in Vienna they were 3-0 up after only 42 minutes. I was lucky to score after about an hour, and that meant we had to play a third match to settle it, in Madrid. Joseito and Kopa got a goal each and we went through.

Do you remember another day at Chamartin, in the 1958-59 campaign, when an almost unknown Turkish goalkeeper named Varol, playing for Besiktas, came very near to spoiling your European Cup?

I certainly do. Varol was an excellent goalkeeper, always dressed in black. I was sent off that afternoon, but we won 2-0 then drew 1-1 in Istanbul.

Let's move on to the Glasgow Final in 1960, against Eintracht Frankfurt, a match that has gone down as one of the most dazzling in the history of the game.

Ten goals in a Final, seven for us and three for the Germans – what an incredible spectacle! It'll always be remembered because of the score. But I still believe that the best was against Milan in Brussels. It was unbelievable.

What was the greatest strength of that Real Madrid of the first five European Cups?

We were a team that knew what we wanted: to win. And we knew how to do it. It was a team that was perfectly organised at the back as well as up front. But I have to admit that sometimes we were relieved to see the ball go in the net! If we could put on a show for the fans, we would do so, but if we were winning 2-0 and we thought it would suit us better to slow the game down a little, then we could do that, too. But we were always ready to give all we had, to play as if we were behind, because we never really thought about records, we just wanted to win more titles.

That's what you did until you finally lost, to Barcelona in the second round of the sixth edition. Then the next year, Benfica beat you in your sixth Cup Final.

Well, everyone was out to beat us, which was fair enough. And don't forget it was a great Benfica team that beat us, with players like Coluna, Jose Augusto, Eusebio and Simoes.

How do you answer the critics who say it wouldn't be possible to do today what Real Madrid did in those early years, and that you only managed it because there was far less competition and fewer matches.

No, that's not really correct. If anything, it was more difficult then, because the tournament was run on the knockout system. Now, even if you lose two matches, you can still go through. In our day, if you lost one round, you were out. You had no second chance to put things straight. Now there are more matches and more opponents, but also weaker teams. That Real Madrid of the five European Cups was one of the greatest teams, but it wasn't perfect. The perfect team does not exist. And the proof is that even when we were winning all those titles, we still had to play deciding matches against Rapid Wien, Atletico Madrid and Juventus. And we were really made to suffer against some other teams, too.

But weren't these the exceptions?

No, people are wrong. They think we won those Cups effortlessly, playing against weak opponents. In fact it was quite the contrary. If we won, it was because we worked hard at it. We all worked towards it. If football was an individual sport like tennis, or swimming or boxing, then we would have to talk about the individuals. But football is all about the team.

But no team has been truly great without great individual players.

There's no substitute for quality. It's true that it has no age or time, but around great quality players there are always others who work as well. You can't have one without the other.

You learnt your own skills at two great football schools, first at River Plate in Argentina and then at Real Madrid.

Not forgetting Millonarios [of Colombia]!

Which was your favourite?

Each one had great things going for it. At Real we made history, but River was the very essence of football; there we played two-touch football, which is more complicated than dribbling as the dribbler doesn't always know where he's heading.

When some people compare the differences between the game then and now they say that players in the 1950s were great because they had plenty of space and were hardly under any pressure.

That's just ignorant, typical of anyone who speaks without having seen the way football was played in the past.

And nowadays? Is there too much sensationalism attached to footballers now?

It might be that football has become over-professionalised, but that's not altogether a bad thing. What has grown is the environment surrounding the game. In my time, for example, the media could only go so far. When I began playing they could only reach what was close at hand, but now they manage to get everywhere. But the personality of players has not changed at all. There are some who work and don't have much attention paid to them, while others are the opposite. But that's the way it's always been.

Alfredo Di Stefano was talking exclusively with Luis Arnaiz of Spanish magazine Don Balon, *a member of the ESM group (European Sports Magazines)*

Through the years...(opposite) Di Stefano today in the Real Madrid trophy room; (clockwise from right) in his playing prime; scoring against Eintracht Frankfurt in the 1960 Final; in action against Barcelona in 1955

Core four...Del Piero, Totti, Vieri and Camoranesi are all likely to have starting roles at the finals

Raising expectations

Paddy Agnew on the positive attitude of the Azzurri

ITALY HAVE TO start as one of the favourites for Euro 2004. Their track record at competition finals, the sheer quality of a side that features the likes of Gianluigi Buffon, Alessandro Nesta, Francesco Totti and Christian Vieri, and a favourable first round draw all mean great things will be expected of the side.

It might be argued that two years ago, on the eve of the World Cup, expectations about Italy were equally high. On that occasion, Italy proved a miserable disappointment, losing to Croatia and struggling to a draw with Mexico in the group stage, and then blowing it in the infamous second-round defeat by South Korea.

In the immediate wake of that early exit, Italy almost blew their chances of qualification for Euro 2004. Playing with deflated morale and the belief that coach Giovanni Trapattoni was soon for the high jump, Italy turned in distinctly low-par performances in a 1-1 home draw with Serbia & Montenegro and a 2-1 defeat away to Wales.

What is to say that Trapattoni's side will not disappoint again? The answer lies with the coach himself. Firstly, his standing among his players has never been stronger, given his double Houdini act in not only staying in the saddle after the World Cup debacle but also in inspiring Italy to come from behind to win their qualifying group.

Secondly, Trapattoni is not too old a dog to learn new tricks, even if he will be 65 by the time Euro 2004 begins. Quite simply, he is unlikely to repeat the errors of his over-cautious ways at the World Cup finals, where Italy had only themselves to blame for not wrapping up the game against South Korea when they were 1-0 ahead.

Undoubtedly Italy's moment of truth in the Euro 2004 qualifying round came on September 6 last year when they faced then group leaders Wales at the San Siro.

Their 4-0 drubbing of the hapless visitors not only restored the natural order of footballing hierarchies but also emphasised all too clearly that

Great experience...Trapattoni

Defensive first-choice...Nesta

when it really matters Italy can come out to play and win. On paper, Italy and Wales are worlds apart in terms of footballing prestige and traditional strength. In Milan, notwithstanding a brave initial 60 minutes from the Welsh, the gulf between the two teams was hammered home.

Attack, attack, attack

On a night when Trapattoni played three strikers (Alessandro Del Piero, Filippo Inzaghi and Vieri) and when Inzaghi became the first Italian since Paolo Rossi in February 1984 to score an international hat-trick, Italy gave a textbook demonstration of controlled, relentless and intelligent attacking football.

Given that the *Azzurri* hit the woodwork four times, that twice Welsh defenders cleared off the line and that an exhausted Christian Vieri also managed to trip over himself with an empty goal at his mercy, it is no exaggeration to say that the final scoreline hardly did justice to Italy.

By the end of 2003, Italy's international results had taken a distinct turn for the better. In 12 games since the infamous defeat at the Millennium stadium in Cardiff in October 2002, Italy lost only once – 3-1 away to Poland in a relatively meaningless friendly last November. In between times, they had picked up nine wins, including friendly defeats of Portugal and Germany as well as four Euro 2004 victories – against Finland (twice), Wales and Azerbaijan.

Significantly, Trapattoni had worked the post-Cardiff revival after introducing some new players. Perhaps the most important of them have been central midfielder Simone Perrotta, Italo-Argentinian right-sided midfielder Mauro Camoranesi and Massimo Oddo at right-back. Furthermore, Trapattoni was able to satisfactorily fill the left-back slot, vacated by Paolo Maldini after his post-World Cup international retirement, with Gianluca Zambrotta.

The coach has been open-minded in his search for the best options available, even if his first-choice team tends to pick itself. By the end of 2003, he had used 62 players in 37 games at the helm, giving debut caps to no fewer than 35 of them. As well as Camoranesi, Perrotta and Oddo, who may well feature in the Euro 2004 starting line-up, the newcomers group has also thrown up useful reserves such as strikers Bernardo Corradi and Marco Di Vaio and defenders Nicola Legrottaglie and Matteo Ferrari.

Trapattoni's first-choice defence comprises Buffon in goal behind a back four of Oddo (or Christian Panucci), Nesta, Fabio Cannavaro and Zambrotta. Perrotta looks like an automatic first-choice midfield ball-winner partnered by either Gennaro Gattuso or Cristiano Zanetti,

Playmaker option...Pirlo

with Camoranesi on the right. Further forward, Totti slots in behind strikers Del Piero and Vieri. Inzaghi, Vincenzo Montella, Corradi, Di Vaio and perhaps even such as Fabrizio Miccoli and Antonio Cassano are all in the running for a squad place as reserve forwards.

In the end, Italy have a squad that has enough class, in-depth strength and experience to win Euro 2004.

THE SQUAD

	CLUB	DOB	CAPS	GLS
GOALKEEPERS				
Cristiano ABBIATI	Milan	08.07.77	2	0
Gianluigi BUFFON	Juventus	28.01.78	41	0
Francesco TOLDO	Internazionale	02.12.71	27	0
DEFENDERS				
Alessandro BIRINDELLI	Juventus	12.11.74	4	0
Fabio CANNAVARO	Internazionale	13.09.73	75	0
Francesco COCO	Internazionale	08.01.77	17	0
Matteo FERRARI	Parma	05.12.79	7	0
Nicola LEGROTTAGLIE	Juventus	20.10.76	6	1
Alessandro NESTA	Milan	19.03.76	56	0
Massimo ODDO	Lazio	14.06.76	9	0
Christian PANUCCI	Roma	12.04.73	40	2
Gianluca ZAMBROTTA	Juventus	19.02.77	35	0
MIDFIELDERS				
Massimo AMBROSINI	Milan	29.05.77	19	0
Mauro CAMORANESI	Juventus	04.10.76	6	0
Stefano FIORE	Lazio	17.04.75	29	2
Gennaro GATTUSO	Milan	09.01.78	23	1
Simone PERROTTA	Chievo	17.09.77	12	0
Andrea PIRLO	Milan	19.05.79	5	0
Alessio TACCHINARDI	Juventus	23.07.75	13	0
Damiano TOMMASI	Roma	17.05.74	24	1
Cristiano ZANETTI	Internazionale	14.04.77	15	1
FORWARDS				
Antonio CASSANO	Roma	12.07.82	2	1
Bernardo CORRADI	Lazio	30.03.76	7	2
Alessandro DEL PIERO	Juventus	09.11.74	61	23
Marco DI VAIO	Juventus	15.07.76	10	2
Filippo INZAGHI	Milan	09.08.73	47	20
Fabrizio MICCOLI	Juventus	27.06.79	5	0
Vincenzo MONTELLA	Roma	18.06.74	18	3
Francesco TOTTI	Roma	27.09.76	37	6
Christian VIERI	Internazionale	12.07.73	36	19

Caps and goals up to and including Italy v Romania (16.11.03)

Furthermore, even the superstitious Trapattoni had to acknowledge that Italy had been favoured by being pooled in the group stage with Sweden, Bulgaria and Denmark. Above all, they had missed out on the two sides he most feared meeting – tournament hosts Portugal and holders France.

For this Italy to realise their potential, however, one or two of the biggest names, in particular Totti and Del Piero, need to finally stand up and consistently deliver on the international stage. Much responsibility may sit upon the shoulders of Totti, a player of undoubted talent but one who has a tendency to go missing when the pressure is really on. If Totti fails to deliver, Trapattoni may be tempted to find a role for Milan's deep-lying playmaker Andrea Pirlo.

Much responsibility, too, will sit on the shoulders of Trapattoni, a coach of immense experience. If he holds his nerve, if Totti delivers and if Vieri is in form, then Italy could go all the way, thus atoning for the bitter disappointment of that golden goal loss to France in the Euro 2000 Final in Rotterdam.

Hakan YAKIN

Swiss playmaker back at Basle and with a point to prove to the French

STILL AGGRIEVED BY his recent on-off transfer from Basle to Paris Saint-Germain, Swiss playmaker Hakan Yakin will no doubt be suitably motivated when his country face France in the Euro 2004 group stage.

PSG and Yakin had initially been delighted with the deal they struck last summer. Thanks to a favourable release clause in the Swiss international's contract, the Parisians were able to sign one of Europe's most creative talents for just £1.2million, while Yakin had his long-craved move to the continental mainstream, more than doubling his salary in the process.

But the relationship soon turned sour. Yakin suffered a recurrence of his long-term groin injury problems during pre-season training at his new club. After a recurring muscle strain was diagnosed by PSG doctors, he was ordered to rest for four to six weeks.

That, however, was not good enough for the Switzerland-born player of Turkish roots. Keen for a second opinion, he flew to Switzerland to consult his personal doctor, Heinz Buhlmann. The latter slammed PSG for their over-strenuous training regime and came to the conclusion that Yakin was suffering from a double hernia, which required surgery.

Despite a warning from the PSG management that his future at the club was untenable if he went against their medical advice, Yakin nevertheless opted to have the operation, and just three weeks into a four-year contract, the Parisians tore it up. The club claimed that the player had concealed his history of groin trouble from them and that on the day he signed, he was simply not fit for top-level sport.

"I'm 100 per cent sure I did the right thing," says Yakin, whose elder brother Murat is Basle and Switzerland's centre-back and captain. "The groin was giving me tremendous pain. The muscle was rock-hard. I didn't seek an operation. It was quite clear that my injury was not going to respond to therapy. I behaved correctly."

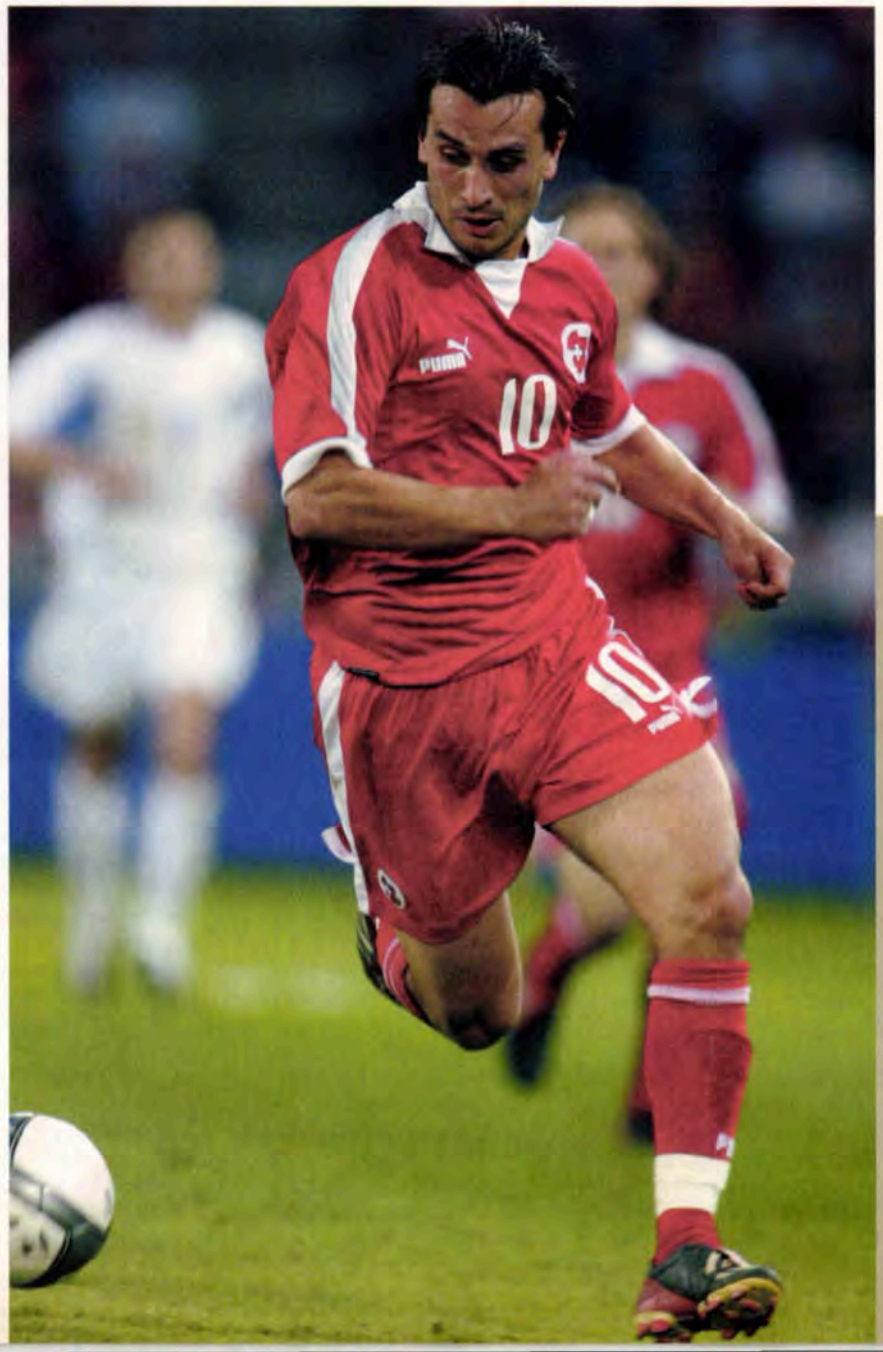
Fortunately for Yakin, Basle were more than happy to take him on again, and he was back in action by late September, scoring in a UEFA Cup win away to Malatyaspor in Turkey.

Basle were not the only ones pleased to have Yakin back in the fold. To the relief of Swiss national coach Kobi Kuhn, he was available for the do-or-die Euro 2004 qualifier at home to the Republic of Ireland in October. Although short of match practice, the playmaker was as influential as ever in the 55 minutes he was on the pitch, on hand to score the opening goal in the 2-0 win and supplying the invention that the Swiss so badly lack when he is not around.

Yakin, a prolific striker in his early days at hometown club Basle – where he is now in his third spell after time at Grasshopper and St Gallen – now plays with great effect just behind the front-runners. As he proved in Basle's exciting Champions League run last season, he has attributes aplenty, not least his brilliant left foot, great vision and free-kick ability.

Kuhn acknowledges Yakin's value to the national team, too, saying: "Hakan is the man for the killer pass. He sees attacking possibilities that others don't and has the passing skills to open up any defence. He makes and scores goals. He is outstanding."

Nick Bidwell



FACT FILE

Club Basle
Country Switzerland
Born February 22, 1977, in Basle
Previous clubs Concordia Basle, Basle, Grasshopper, St Gallen, Grasshopper, Basle, Paris Saint-Germain (Fra)
International debut February 2000, v Oman
International caps 27 (12 goals)
Honours Swiss League 2002; Swiss Cup 2002, 2003

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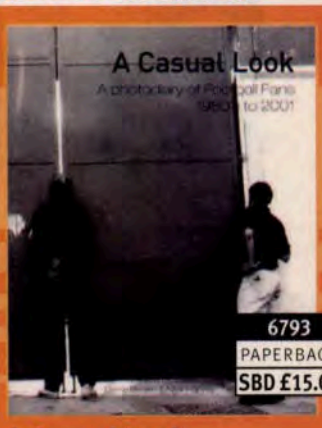

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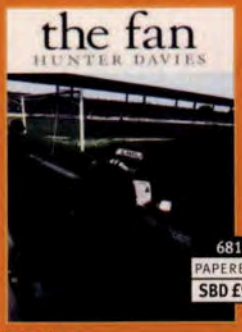

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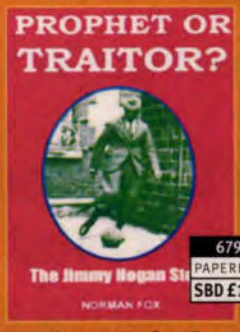

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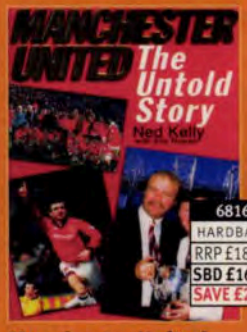

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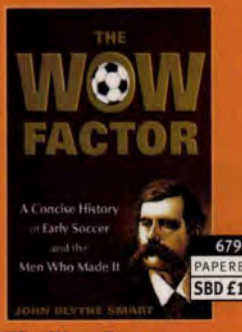

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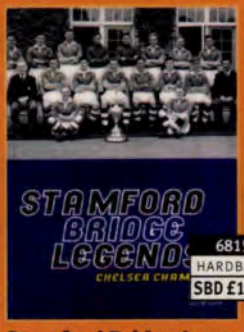

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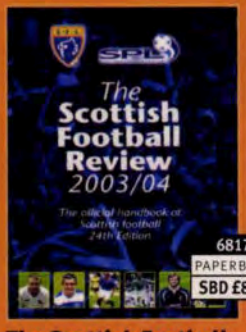

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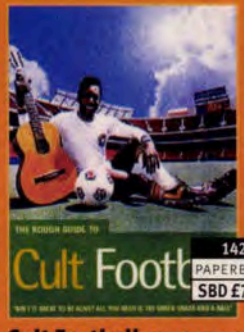

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Keir Radnedge **COMMENTARY**

Storms ahead for Olsson

UEFA's new chief executive faces a tough challenge

UEFA IS 50 YEARS OLD this year. But the birthday party is threatening to become a little fraught, with more than a suspicion that the organisers have gone walkabout.

Lars-Christer Olsson took over as chief executive at the start of January from the retired Gerd Aigner but not the least of the issues in the 'pending' tray is UEFA's very *raison d'etre*. What is UEFA about? Is it merely an administrative machine to run football competitions or is it responsible for sport strategy in an ever-changing social and cultural environment? Where is the leadership and, most important, where is the defensive shield? Does UEFA have the men in place to fulfil those roles or is it facing internal political confusion, which will prevent it fending off FIFA's invasion of its business?

Involvement...Olsson partakes in the Euro 2004 play-off draw

Let's start with the most contentious, though not most important, of issues: Rio Ferdinand and his missed dope test.

UEFA appears to have stood well back and allowed the English FA to run the show. Yet, when FIFA president Sepp Blatter came steaming in with all sorts of opinions, statements, demands and orders, where was UEFA? Did Nyon come bounding to the defence of one of its own members, which was 'merely' following properly laid-down, legally-approved rules and regulations? No.

Silence, too, on the right of Manchester United to go as far as may be deemed proper within the regulations to defend their player. If that means going to the FIFA-approved Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne then all well and good. That is United's right, and they do not need intimidation from FIFA. Indeed, it may well be that United's aggressive response vis-a-vis September 23 was in part provoked by a suspicion (paranoid, for some) that the authorities were ganging up on them.

Then, where was UEFA in standing up for the clubs that lay its golden eggs when Blatter embarked on his diatribe about their neo-colonialist rape of African and Asian football?

Averting the eyes

On these issues, UEFA appeared to behave precisely as it did in the early years of the European Union, i.e. look in the opposite direction, oblivious to the enemy at the gate.

This is an old theme and one Aigner has always disputed. But European and world football need not have been caught out by Bosman in 1995. If it had headed off that problem it could have been spared the subsequent agonies about scrapping foreign player restrictions and building a new transfer system (windows and all).

UEFA president Lennart Johansson has been in charge during 14 years of unprecedented expansion. The European Championship has been enlarged to 16 teams and the Champions Cup evolved into the Champions League, which revolutionised European football's international finance – and turned FIFA the most envious shade of green.

Now, not surprisingly, FIFA is determined to push ahead with a second edition of its own World Club Championship, in 2005. Why? Because it has awoken to the financial benefits of the club game compared with the national team alternative. So, Blatter laid into those greedy self-centred members of G-14? Well, that was December. FIFA will need the G-14 clubs to bring credibility, sponsorship and television coverage to its club event. So expect Blatter to turn diplomatic pragmatist.

That violent opposition to national team compensation may prove merely an initial negotiating stance. (Remember, G-14 is *not* demanding that national federations pay the players' full wages; merely that the governing bodies make a contributory gesture *direct* from the coffers of the big events – World Cup, European Championship, etc.)

UEFA needs to remember its English lesson. One day the big clubs of the Football League teamed up with the Football Association to form the Premier League. In an ever-smaller world it takes no great stretch of the imagination to see FIFA cosying up to the world's big clubs. UEFA's threat to the elite of exclusion from the world football family would be an empty threat indeed.

Is UEFA ready for that? To see its own Champions League reduced to the sad state to which the European body has itself condemned the UEFA Cup? Doubtful.

I stand on neither one side nor the other. But I can see which way the wind is blowing, and UEFA does not have much time to sweep up the leaves. But who is to do it? Johansson's health has been in question ever since he was taken ill with a heart problem at the 2000 Olympic Games. He even considered standing down as UEFA president but was persuaded to stay on (by the now-departed Aigner) to stop the Michel Platini bandwagon.

Johansson missed both the World Cup and Euro 2004 draws in December – and the associated FIFA and UEFA meetings – because of illness. "Nothing serious," said a phalanx of UEFA spokespeople on and off the record. Good, because Johansson has earned a long, happy and healthy retirement. But if you are the boss, you have to be seen to be the boss. Absence only leaves a vocal void which invites FIFA up to the microphone.

Now, Aigner has handed over to Olsson, another Swede, albeit 'only' 53 and formerly

UEFA's director of professional football and marketing. Olsson has everything it takes to fill the role effectively. But Aigner had spent more than 25 years growing with the job of general secretary as it evolved into that of chief executive. He was his own boss, his own most demanding employee and his own spokesman.

Olsson has to grow into the job, which will take time – perhaps there is too little of it now there is an ever-more serious prospect of Platini stepping into Johansson's presidential shoes and bringing a massive shift in European football's political balance.

Platini's role

Platini, after all, was brought into the corridors of power by Blatter at FIFA. So would the Frenchman, as UEFA president, be Europe's man or Blatter's man? Platini will turn on the charm and envisage being an effective bridge between FIFA and UEFA. But FIFA may want not merely a bridge but the right to pour troops across it.

This would not be a matter of such concern if FIFA had demonstrated a strategy of balance in all things. Yet Blatter continues to demand 16-team domestic leagues while blithely refusing to scrap the tragic Confederations Cup and continuing with the World Club Championship. Also, FIFA demands fewer matches, yet sanctions a European World Cup qualifying programme built in favour of both finance and fatigue. So we have three top-heavy groups of seven nations plus five groups of six nations plus all the messy play-offs.

UEFA, perhaps surprisingly, is not the oldest of the confederations – it was founded in 1954, around the same time as the Asian and African confederations but decades after South America's CONMEBOL came into being, in 1916. So why was it such a late baby? Because for decades FIFA was considered Euro-centric. Still today, more than 90 per cent of international football's wealth is generated by Europe. But Europe has no divine right to political power within football. It needs to stand up for itself and quickly.

The UEFA chief executive's office boasts a vast picture window with a wonderful view to the south across Lake Geneva to the French Alps. It's a day-dreamer's delight. If Olsson has any sense he will pull the blinds. The real view from Nyon is only of storms ahead.

Brazil still bear a grudge

BRAZIL, IT BECAME clear at the 2006 World Cup qualifying draw in Frankfurt, are still seething at FIFA's decision to end the holders' right to an automatic place in the next finals.

In December 2001 the world governing body's executive committee decided to scrap the traditional prize for ultimate success. The reason stated was a rebalancing of the qualifying slots to grant direct access, for the first time, to the winners of the Oceania section (usually Australia).

South American officials were furious because they also lost the right for their own 'lucky losers' to play off for a finals place – a play-off they always win. Their high-pressure campaign led to Oceania's guaranteed place being scrapped – but not to the holders getting their automatic ticket back.

Pele, Brazil's winning hero in 1958 and 1970, even broke with protocol during the 2006 draw. Asked about Brazil's sluggish start in the qualifying campaign for the Germany finals, Pele responded by saying that he did not think Brazil should have been submitted to the indignity of having to qualify.

Back in Brazil, national coach Carlos Alberto Parreira went even further. He said: "A lot of people think we have been victims of a Europe-led conspiracy to make it as hard as possible for Brazil to win a sixth World Cup in Germany in 2006. Is it coincidence that Brazil are the first country affected by a change in the rules?"

Parreira was telling the fiercely patriotic Brazilian media exactly what they wanted to hear. But of course the rules were changed seven months before Brazil won the World Cup for a record-extending fifth time in Japan in 2002.

Also, the holders of the European Championship have to battle their way through the qualifying competition for the right to defend their crown. European champions France will be in Portugal next summer not by virtue of their golden-goal win over Italy in Rotterdam in the Euro 2000 Final but because they topped their qualifying group with a perfect record. They were the only team in the Euro qualifiers to win all their eight games.

As for Brazil, the irritation officials and media still feel about the World Cup decision was clear from the manner in which they snubbed the draw (though it's true that the South American qualifying group – a home-and-away league featuring all 10 of the region's nations – began months ago).

As Parreira put it: "This draw was just a party for the Europeans and the sponsors. I hope they had a good time. But when it comes to the football in 2006 it won't be a European party any longer."

Qualified success...Ronaldo scores during the 2006 preliminaries – but Brazil feel they should be finalists by right

DIGEST

NEWS AND REPORTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

You beauty...scorer Fernandinho and Dudu race away to celebrate Brazil's World Youth Cup-winning goal

Hat-trick heroes

Keir Radnedge reports on a third concurrent world title for Brazil, this time at the Under-20 World Youth Cup

AT TEENAGE LEVEL, the game is still wide open and the African nations have a significant role to play. But when it starts getting serious, class and tradition begin to weigh in. Thus it proved once more when Brazil defeated Spain in the Under-20 World Youth Cup Final in the United Arab Emirates to win the competition for the fourth time.

Fernandinho's late headed goal – the only one of the game – also wrapped up a world title treble for the Brazilians after the senior team's World Cup triumph in Japan in 2002 and the Under-17 victory in Finland last summer. This makes them the world's greatest football nation by a long way.

European opinion focused on the disruptive fourth-minute expulsion of Spain's Melli in the Final and the inability of nations such as Germany and England to send their best teams because of club duties. Overall, the European contribution was

disappointing, as was that of the Africans, whose three second-round qualifiers all lost.

The brightest feature, taking a long-term perspective, was possibly the continuing progress demonstrated by Asia. South Korea and Japan earned a new level of respect in 2002 and reached the knockout stages here – along with hosts UAE, whose outstanding Ismail Matar was named player of the tournament.

The Al Wahda striker, already a full international, was largely responsible for inspiring the UAE to the quarter-finals – always an important factor in maintaining domestic interest during an international tournament. Quick on the ball, deft in passing and with a remarkably powerful shot, Matar has the world at his feet.

It remains to be seen whether UAE officials will have the sense to allow him to develop his talents abroad. Emirates football, in the long term, would be the winner.

Not that Matar's award was universally approved. The South American contingent mumbled about it being "a political choice" and would have preferred to see Brazil's Dudu Cearanse rewarded. The dominating defensive midfielder from Vitoria Bahia may appear an unusual Brazilian hero but his elegance and vision drew comparisons with old heroes such as Socrates. Instead, he had to make do with the individual runner-up prize.

Shaky Brazil

Brazil and Dudu did not have a clear run to the title. They made an all-important winning start, 2-0 against Canada, but were held 1-1 by the Czech Republic and squeezed through to the second round as group runners-up after a shock 3-2 defeat by Australia.

Brazil teetered on the brink in the second round as well after Slovakia had gone ahead through Filip Sebo on the hour. Dudu equalised in the 83rd minute to force extra-time, during which he also scored the golden goal winner.

Now, at last, coach Marcos Paqueta's boys opened up, recording a 5-1 win over Japan. Attacking midfielder Daniel Carvalho came into his own, scoring twice, and it was all over by half-time when Brazil led 4-0.

That victory sent them on into a semi-final against old rivals Argentina, who had won the South American Under-20 title ahead of the Brazilians, but lost the one-off tie that really mattered. Dudu was again the match-winner, scoring the only goal.

Spain, under the understanding leadership of former European Cup-winner Juan Santisteban, have pinched Portugal's mantle as the most effective age-group nation in Europe.

Here, co-coach Armando Ufarte may not have been provided with their best squad of recent years but players such as Eibar goalkeeper Asier Riesgo, midfielders Andres Iniesta from Barcelona and Real Madrid's Juanfran as well as striker Sergio Garcia – also from Barcelona – should soon make a name for themselves at senior level.

The only caution, as with previous Spanish youth heroes, will be whether clubs give the kids the essential space and time in an import-cluttered Liga.

Like Brazil, Spain also finished runners-up in their group. They lost 2-1 to Argentina in their opening game then squeezed narrow victories over Mali and Uzbekistan. Sergio Garcia scored the only goal of their second round win against Paraguay, Javier Arizmendi the golden goal quarter-final winner against Canada, and Iniesta converted a late penalty to defeat Colombia in the semi-finals.

By the time the Final between Spain and Brazil kicked off in Abu Dhabi, the pattern was clear and not particularly varied. Three South American nations in the last four – Colombia beat Argentina 2-1 for third place – spoke volumes about the pride that the CONMEBOL region invests in the event.

Europe, by shaming contrast, had just Spain, Slovakia and the Republic of Ireland in the second round, and only the Spaniards went further. England, Germany and the Czech Republic all finished bottom of their groups.

It was a record only slightly better than that of the Africans and represented the opposite extreme to South America's response.

Certainly, this particular championship had been blighted by the need to delay it for eight months because of the military action in Iraq. But it is no use thinking that Europe's response would have been any better any earlier.

Spain, outnumbered by the same three South American countries in the semi-finals as their Under-17 counterparts had been in Finland, were outnumbered for most of the Final as well.

Melli was sent off by Italian referee Roberto Rosetti in only the fourth minute for bringing down Nilmar as he chased down Daniel Carvalho's through pass. The Spaniards were furious but Melli was the last defender and Spanish prospects would have been better served even by conceding a goal than conceding a player.

Tired Spain

"Melli should have got a yellow card, not red, because there was no danger of Nilmar scoring," said Ufarte. "Brazil are a good team but they were lucky. If we hadn't been so tired from playing all the match with 10 men they would never have scored their winning goal."

Brazil boss Paqueta also thought the sending-off harsh and was almost downbeat in assessing the victory. "It was not our best performance," he said. "Really, I expected us to play better, but we often have more problems against teams with 10 men than with 11."

Spain regrouped with a great deal of grit and discipline, and their anger with Rosetti intensified after Sergio Garcia had a 75th-minute goal disallowed for a foul. Not until the 87th minute did substitute Fernandinho finally head Brazil's winner from a corner to make world hat-trick history.

● *For tournament results and squads, see World Service, starting page 75.*

Triumphant...Brazil skipper Adailton

2003 WORLD YOUTH CUP

Acrobat...the outstanding Ismail Matar

TOP SCORERS

Johnson (USA) 4
Dudu (Bra) 4
Sakata (Jap) 4
Cavenaghi (Arg) 4

TOP PLAYER

Ismail Matar (UAE)

TOTAL ATTENDANCE

183,616 (match average 3,531)

SQUAD OF THE TOURNAMENT

GOALKEEPERS
Cronin (USA)
Ekramy (Egy)
DEFENDERS
Daniel Alves (Bra)
Alcides Eduardo (Bra)
Fernandez (Arg)
Hutchinson (Can)
MIDFIELDERS
Carlos Alberto (Bra)
Dudu (Bra)
Convey (USA)
Gabi (Spa)
Iniesta (Spa)
FORWARDS
Daniel Carvalho (Bra)
Kleber (Bra)
Matar (UAE)
Montano (Col)
Sergio Garcia (Spa)

PREVIOUS WINNERS

1977 Soviet Union
1979 Argentina
1981 West Germany
1983 Brazil
1985 Brazil
1987 Yugoslavia
1989 Portugal
1991 Portugal
1993 Brazil
1995 Argentina
1997 Argentina
1999 Spain
2001 Argentina

No one likes me, I don't care

Howard Johnson argues that Alex Ferguson's siege mentality could be his undoing at Manchester United

ENGLAND

WHEN SIR ALEX FERGUSON signs schoolboy hopefuls for Manchester United, do you think he has them reciting a pledge of allegiance to the club every day before they take to the training pitch? "No one likes us, we don't care…no one likes us, we don't care."

You can just see it now. Row upon row of future Red Devils getting into the spirit of things nice and early. As far as United's manager is concerned, it seems there is no better way to protect the club's position as England's No 1 sporting force than by instilling the siege mentality in the very bosoms of his warriors on the pitch. Trust no one and don't let the bastards grind you down, because no matter what they say, they're all out to get us.

Does Ferguson really believe that everyone has it in for Manchester United? Maybe. Maybe not. The Scotsman, who knows a thing or two about the importance of psychological warfare in the sporting arena, has seen the benefits of an 'us against the world' mentality for many a long year. United's trophy cabinet is testament to that. So it was no surprise whatsoever to witness the club's bullish attitude to the Rio Ferdinand drug-testing case and his subsequent eight-month ban. "It is a particularly savage and unprecedented sentence which makes an appeal inevitable," said director Maurice Watkins.

Did anybody really expect United to hold up their hands, say 'We've made a bit of a cock-up here, haven't we?' and take their lumps like men? Of course not.

There was nothing so obvious as the fact that Ferdinand was guilty of not taking the test. Whether he would have passed it or not is irrelevant, that was not the issue. So how could Ferguson make capital out of the situation? By inflaming a sense of moral indignation about how unfair it all was, with everyone picking on little old Man United again.

Poor old Rio. He's just a kid. Surely you can't expect him to be able to do anything as sophisticated as turn up for testing when he is supposed to? And surely you can't expect an organisation like United to track him down the minute his forgetfulness becomes apparent? That would be asking too much. And nobody at United would be involved in drug-taking anyway. Ferguson would see to that all right.

The manager can keep his own house in order. Just ask Paul McGrath. Or Norman Whiteside. Or Lee Sharpe. What more evidence do you need that those FA folk have got it in for the mighty Reds?

No wonder Ferguson loves Gary Neville so much. He fell for all those notions hook, line and sinker.

"It has brought the dressing-room closer," said the England defender. "When that sentence was read out I think everybody was in disbelief. I couldn't believe it. We feel for Rio because, while he made a mistake, we don't think he should be missing matches. We are human beings, not robots."

A well-thought out argument that I'm sure Neville would be only too happy to repeat when Arsenal players forget to turn up for their next dope-testing session. And just imagine how apoplectic Neville will be if the World Anti-Doping Agency gets its way and has Ferdinand's ban increased to two years.

Still, idiotic or not, Ferguson will be rubbing his hands. His right-back will now be tearing around the pitch for the rest of the season, trying to make a point about the sheer injustice of it all. Job done. Or is it?

The 'us against them' mentality can be a powerful motivating force. But what about when it's 'us against us'? Ferguson's very public spat with United's largest individual shareholder, John Magnier, over the stud fees from wonderhorse Rock of Gibraltar has actually led to United's manager instigating legal action.

This is not a case of dealing with a difficult situation by trotting out the old 'Everyone has got it in for Man United' line. This is Ferguson risking a highly damaging rift at the club over a personal disagreement that has nothing to do with football. Solidarity, it seems, is something he only values on the playing side.

He got away with it once before, of course, calling the club's bluff over his retirement when certain board members were questioning how healthy it was for him to stick around so long. But there is no guarantee that he would do so a second time.

Would the manager's role as self-appointed defender of the United faith be jeopardised if everyone could see that a personal issue was actively damaging the club? You bet it would.

Magnier may now simply have had enough of Ferguson. Is it too fanciful to suggest the former is looking to engineer a way in which he will end up calling the shots at Old Trafford? And if that happens, Sir Alex might one day find himself driving away from the Theatre of Dreams for the last time with a new mantra all of his own: "No one likes me, I don't care."

Shouting the odds...but will Ferguson's stance have the desired effect for United?

Future uncertain...Cisse could well be absent from France's title defence in Portugal after being sent off in an Under-21 match

Cisse set to miss Euro finals

Erik Bielderman on the dilemma facing national coach Santini

FRANCE

A FIVE COMPETITIVE-GAME suspension for a moment of madness while playing for France's Under-21s has left Djibril Cisse fearing he will miss the European Championship.

If an appeal to UEFA fails to overturn or reduce the ban, France coach Jacques Santini will most certainly be forced to drop the Auxerre striker from his squad for Portugal. A five-game ban would mean Cisse would be eligible only for the Final, were the defending champions to make it that far.

Cisse, with his club team-mate Philippe Mexes, were regulars from the senior national team who were called in to play in France's European Under-21 Championship qualifying play-off against Portugal in mid-November. Cisse scored twice as France won 2-1 in the first leg in Guimaraes. In the return game, at Clermont Ferrand, he scored again, but was later sent off for lashing out at an opponent. France lost 2-1 and went out on penalties.

"I should control myself better," said Cisse. "But I am only 22. Great players like Thierry Henry know how to cope with pressure and I must learn from them." (Cisse forgot that Henry is not the best of role models, having been sent off against Uruguay during the 2002 World Cup.)

The player's hopes of a one-match ban were dashed when UEFA announced his punishment – a five-game suspension (three for violent conduct, one for insulting an opponent and one for dissent).

A disappointed French FA launched an appeal which will be heard by UEFA on January 29.

Michel Platini, the former France captain and now a member of FIFA's executive committee, had little sympathy with his compatriot, saying: "Cisse made a mistake. Next time he will have to think about acting in this way. Five games is a lot, but what he did was stupid. Maybe there is some logic behind this judgment."

Under-21 coach Raymond Domenech saw the situation differently. "This is dictatorship from UEFA," he said. "They condemn from their desks and give support to a referee who failed that night [English referee Rob Styles's performance in the second leg came in for heavy French criticism]. This decision is scandalous."

Guy Roux, Cisse's coach at Auxerre, and who was not happy to see him playing for the Under-21s, added: "This is not fair. It's a political decision."

Thoughts immediately turned to possible replacements for Cisse in the France squad. The most obvious would be Nicolas Anelka, who has the same style of play and is well liked by the younger generation in the camp. But there has been bad blood between Anelka and Santini. Anelka, unhappy with a limited role as substitute, refused to play for his country until the coach "apologised on his knees".

Santini has insisted that he will never recall Anelka, but it appears that some contact has been made through third parties to try to reach a gentleman's agreement. Few believe it will be accomplished despite the Cisse case.

So which player is likely to step up? Pegguy Luyindula, the Lyon and Under-21 striker is one possibility, as is Sochaux's Pierre-Alain Frau (see Talent Scout, page 69). Neither has played for the senior team, while the likes of Sidney Govou (Lyon), Daniel Moreira (Lens), Olivier Kapo (Auxerre) and Steve Marlet (Marseille) have done so but never really convinced.

Marlet, who played for Lyon under Santini, is said to be the strong favourite. But his club form for first Fulham and now Marseille has been less than convincing.

The belief in France is that UEFA will reduce the ban to three games. But that would still mean Cisse missing all three Euro 2004 group games, against England, Croatia and Switzerland. And can Santini really afford to take a player who will be ineligible for at least half the tournament?

At least with a five-game ban, Santini has to look for another player. Given that Cisse has so far failed to convince in a France shirt, that is probably the best course of action.

● PIERRE FLAMION, one of the pillars of the Reims side that dominated French football in the 1950s, has died aged 79. An inside- or outside-left, Flamion scored 120 First Division goals for the club, winning League and Cup honours. He struck eight goals in 17 games for France between 1948 and 1953.

Flamion later followed coach Henri Roessler to Marseille before winding down his playing career with Lyon, Troyes and Limoges – where he became player-coach. He also coached at Chaumont, Metz and Troyes before returning to take Reims' reins in 1974.

Keir Radnedge

HOLLAND

Ajax running out of options

Down and out...Jari Litmanen, Wesley Sneijder and Rafael Van der Vaart are dejected after Ajax's Champions League exit

AJAX NOW HAVE only one chance of winning some silverware – the domestic League – after crashing out of the Champions League and the national Cup in the space of 10 days.

Their 2-1 defeat at Club Brugge on the final Champions League matchday meant they finished bottom of Group H and therefore even missed out on the compensation of a UEFA Cup place.

Ajax then lost 2-0 at home to NAC Breda in the Cup to make it a thoroughly miserable end to the year.

The club's early European exit was a huge disappointment, considering that they reached the Champions League quarter-finals last year. But coach Ronald Koeman acknowledged that his players had just not performed well enough, failing, for instance, to take a single point from their three away matches. Two days after the elimination Koeman gave the club a lift by signing a new contract until 2006. This ended speculation that he would leave for Barcelona and suggested he was still determined to build a side capable of leading Ajax back to the top in Europe.

Young talents Wesley Sneijder and John Heitinga have already followed his example by signing new deals, though there is no guarantee that other key players such as Rafael Van der Vaart, Hatem Trabelsi, Zlatan Ibrahimovic or Maxwell will follow suit.

PSV also failed to progress through their Champions League group, though they did finish third to book a UEFA Cup berth. The Eindhoven club were hardly helped by the continuing lack of European goals from main striker Mateja Kezman. Last season's League top scorer with 35 goals again failed to find the net in the Champions League, for the second campaign in a row.

Twente are the latest side to gain the 'giantkillers' tag after defeating Feyenoord (4-2) and Ajax (2-0) in the League within eight days. Congo-born Swiss striker Blaise N'Kufo scored twice in each match to secure hero status in Enschede. However, he is only on loan from Hannover in Germany, and the club fear they will not be able to afford him on a permanent deal.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

PORTUGAL

Porto on a downer after Derlei injury

FC PORTO'S HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL year was tarnished when Derlei, leading scorer on their run to UEFA Cup triumph in May, tore knee ligaments in the last game before the Christmas break and is likely to be out for the rest of the season.

The Brazilian had eclipsed much-heralded playmaker Deco in the first half of the campaign in keeping the defending champions at the top of the table. Derlei was injured shortly after scoring his 13th goal in 15 Superliga matches in a 2-1 victory at Alverca.

The game also had a sour taste for Porto keeper Vitor Baia, who let in an incredibly soft goal to reduce even further his chances of a national team recall.

Benfica, powered by the goals of Simao Sabrosa – arguably the most talented Portuguese player still in action on home soil – looked strong at the end of the year having won seven games in a row.

Sporting Lisbon, the other 'Big Three' club, also showed good League form – but a complete lack of it in cup competitions. The Lions followed up their embarrassing 3-0 UEFA Cup home defeat by Turkey's Genclerbirligi (4-1 on aggregate) by losing 1-0, also at home, to Second Division Setubal in the national Cup.

Beira Mar and Maritimo, meanwhile, showed themselves capable of giving the traditional powerhouses a run for their money, having won two and drawn two of their combined six games against the 'Big Three' to date.

Pedro Pinto

Season cut short...Derlei

SWITZERLAND

Vonlanthen back on board

Calming down...Vonlanthen has retracted his threat to quit the Swiss Under-21 team

JOHAN VONLANTHEN has recovered from his tantrum over being named only a substitute for a recent Swiss Under-21 game and told coach Bernard Challandes he still wishes to play for the team.

The 17-year-old, who plays his club football for PSV Eindhoven in Holland, was furious at not starting the European Championship play-off first leg against the Czech Republic. He refused to take his place on the bench and, instead, watched the match from the stands.

Vonlanthen then said he would rather play for Colombia, the country of his birth and where he spent his first 14 years, but has since made his peace with Challandes.

Basle, unbeaten in the first half of the League season, are virtually assured of one of the two Champions League slots after going 21 points clear of third-placed Servette.

Champions Grasshopper, trailing in seventh place, are pinning their European hopes next season on winning the Swiss Cup. They meet city rivals FC Zurich in the semi-finals in March, with St Gallen and Wil contesting the other tie.

Grasshopper have appointed Aarau coach Alain Geiger to replace the sacked Marcel Koller, now with Koln in the Bundesliga. In another coaching change, Wil hired Joachim Muller from German club Chemnitzer SC after Martin Andermatt was fired by the club's new Ukrainian owners.

Neuchatel Xamax have a new president in Frenchman Alain Pedretti, 48, who already controls French clubs Cannes and Creteil.

Ivar von Rulach

BELGIUM

Anderlecht enjoy home comforts

The disappointment of going out of the Champions League to an extremely dubious penalty did not last too long for Anderlecht. They were able to enjoy their mid-winter break as comfortable Belgian League leaders, lying eight points clear of Standard Liege.

The mauve and whites closed out the first half of the season with a 4-1 win at La Louviere – which reduced the pain of the 1-0 defeat by Bayern Munich in their final Champions League match that left them bottom of Group A and also out of the UEFA Cup.

Michal Zewlakow had appeared to tussle perfectly legally for the ball with Bayern's Claudio Pizarro, but his tumble in the box prompted Danish referee Kim Milton Nielsen to award Bayern their highly-questionable spot-kick. Roy Makaay converted to hand the German side victory.

Charleroi goalkeeper Bertrand Laquait made Belgian history in the final League round of the autumn by scoring with a clearance from inside his own penalty area after only two minutes at Mons. However, the visitors let this advantage slip, ending up with a 2-2 draw that left them stranded at the bottom of the League with just 11 points from 17 games.

Nicholas Harling

AUSTRIA

Karnten spending to avoid drop

Karnten, bottom of the table at the winter break, are investing heavily in an attempt to avoid relegation.

Although the Klagenfurt-based club could not close a deal with veteran Austria playmaker Andreas Herzog, other high-profile players were on the verge of joining.

New Karnten coach Peter Pacult, who arrived after being sacked by 1860 Munich, is chasing Grazer AK's Nigerian international Benedict Akwuegbu, while Slovenian national team keeper Mladen Dabanovic, currently at Lokeren in Belgium, is also in the frame.

Karnten, the club of former Freedom Party leader Jorg Haider, were four points from safety at the winter break.

Harry Miltner

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Derry stay up

Derry City retained their top-flight status after narrowly beating north-west neighbours Finn Harps 2-1 on aggregate in the relegation/promotion play-off Final. Veteran striker Liam Coyle scored the winner in second leg extra-time after the first leg had ended goalless.

University College Dublin were relegated automatically, with First Division champions Dublin City taking their place.

The close season has been dominated by news of clubs in financial difficulties, with champions Shelbourne and runners-up Bohemians both forced to cut back on wages. Shamrock Rovers have had to release nine players, who were all out of contract. Meanwhile, Waterford United sacked manager Jimmy McGeough just before Christmas.

Sean Creedon

LIECHTENSTEIN

Brothers hit double trouble

The Stocklasa brothers, Martin and Michael, achieved a rare and unwanted feat when both were sent off during FC Vaduz's 1-1 home draw with Sion in the Liechtenstein side's last game before the winter break.

The internationals were each dismissed for two bookable offences, but their team held on for the point that kept Vaduz in mid-table in the Swiss Challenge League (Second Division). Keeper Carlos Silva was the hero of the hour, saving a late penalty to deny Sion victory.

The match was the last in charge for Vaduz coach Walter Hormann, who has left to take the reins at Salzburg in Austria.

Graeme Crawford

SCOTLAND

Celtic close in on title

CELTIC SIGNALLED THEIR intention to regain domestic superiority from champions Rangers by opening up an 11-point lead after an emphatic 3-0 win in the second Old Firm match of the season.

Rangers manager Alex McLeish all but conceded the title when he said: "It's Celtic's to lose now."

Martin O'Neill's men won 18 of their first 19 League games and were set to strengthen their squad by signing highly-rated midfielder Stephen Pearson from Motherwell.

Rangers, hampered during the autumn by injuries to key players such as Ronald De Boer, Mikel Arteta and Craig Moore, have also been in the transfer market, signing Scotland midfielder Gavin Rae from Dundee, while Auxerre defender Jean-Alain Boumsong has agreed to join next summer.

Hearts chairman Chris Robinson has indicated the Edinburgh club's Tynecastle home does not meet UEFA standards and has proposed selling it to reduce debts.

He has suggested Hearts could use nearby Murrayfield, owned by the Scottish Rugby Union, but this has met with a negative response from supporters, worried their average 10,000 crowd would be 'lost' in the 67,500-capacity rugby ground.

Alan Fairley

Hungry Hoops...Henrik Larsson puts the Rangers defence under pressure during Celtic's 3-0 win at Parkhead

NORWAY

Hareide boosts morale

The appointment of Aage Hareide as national team coach has provided an instant fillip to the squad. Hareide, who replaced Nils Johan Semb after Norway's defeat in the Euro 2004 play-offs, is held in great respect by the players for his achievements with Rosenborg in recent years.

Hareide was quick to stress his willingness to encourage the team to play entertaining football – Semb received much criticism about Norway's dull, predictable style during his reign. "We will play attacking football but will also be result-oriented," said Hareide. "It is important to win from day one, and we have to take risks to win."

The new man's first games will be during a four-team tournament in Hong Kong at the end of this month, with Norway meeting Sweden, Honduras and a Hong Kong XI. Hareide's assistant is former Liverpool and Blackburn defender Stig Inge Bjornebye. Although Bjornebye has no coaching experience, he has been studying for a coaching diploma since retiring as a player.

Brann won the race to sign Ragnvald Soma from relegated Bryne, who have also sold Swede Marcus Andreasson to Molde. The latter's other major signing to date is Petter Rudi, who returns to Norway after spells in Belgium and Austria. Molde also have a new coach, Reidar Vaagnes, following the firing of Odd Berg after a year in charge.

Valerenga, who narrowly avoided relegation last season, have signed Per Egil Swift from Oslo rivals Lyn and Tor Henning Hamre from Estonian side Flora Tallinn.

Lyn's new players are Swedish striker Peter Markstedt (Hammarby) and Brage's Calo Halit. They also have new co-coaches in Hans Knutsen and Espen Olafsen.

Sigurd Odegaard

FINLAND

Join the queue for Junior

Alexei Eremenko junior has emerged as one of the hottest properties in Finnish football, with several foreign clubs tracking the HJK Helsinki midfielder.

The naturalised Finn of Russian origin starred in his club's run to the League title last season and made his international debut in a recent 3-2 win over Canada. He is seen as the natural successor to Jari Litmanen, though he did himself no favours with his involvement in a recent drunken brawl in Helsinki.

Eremenko is generally known as Junior, since his father, also Alexei, plays in the Finnish League, too.

Two other international new boys have moved clubs. Pekka Lagerblom has joined Werder Bremen from Lahti, while MyPa's Antti Okkonen is now with Landskrona in Sweden.

Pentti Hietanen

ICELAND

Schooling for the future

The mediocrity of the domestic game was highlighted in the autumn when KR wrapped up the championship with the lowest number of points since the introduction of three points for a win in 1984.

And in European competition Iceland's representatives failed miserably for the second year running.

All, however, is not lost. While UEFA is putting money into playing facilities, help is also at hand from the private sector in the shape of a football academy founded by former Iceland striker Arnor Gudjohnsen, father of Chelsea's Eidur. The school's value has been boosted by the addition of ex-international trio Sigurdur Jonsson, Gudni Bergsson and Eyjolfur Sverrisson to the staff.

Rab Christie

ESTONIA

Kannik takes the helm

Former defence minister Indrek Kannik is the new FA president. The 38-year-old has been on the FA board for almost 10 years and acted as a vice-president before taking up his new duties. He is also a member of UEFA's youth and amateur committee.

Kannik says his priorities are youth development, infrastructure improvement and coach-education programmes.

Andres Must

NORTHERN IRELAND

Glens on the slide

Glentoran, last season's runaway champions, endured a miserable end to the year, suffering five defeats in six League games and losing Scottish midfielder Scott Young for the rest of the season with a broken leg.

Young was injured in a 2-1 defeat at Ards, Glens' fourth loss in a row – the first time they had suffered such a bad run since April 1951. The team then slumped to third from bottom after a 3-1 Boxing Day defeat at home to League leaders Linfield.

Tommy Kincaid quit as coach of Larne, whom he led to promotion last term, citing "personal reasons". His replacement, as player-manager, is John Devine, the former Glentoran stalwart who signed for Larne during the close season. Ollie Ralph is another coaching departure, stepping down at Newry Town following poor results.

The Glentoran-Linfield tie was the final game in charge for Northern Ireland's top referee, Leslie Irvine.

Roy Kitson

WALES

Watkin's debut hat-trick in vain

Steve Watkin scored a hat-trick on his debut for Caernarfon Town against Bangor City, but still ended up on the losing side. Bangor's Paul Roberts hit a hat-trick of his own, on his return after a 12-month injury lay-off, to help his side to a 5-4 win in the Boxing Day derby.

Total Network Solutions overcame Aberystwyth in their derby clash to retain top spot at the halfway point of the season.

Barry Town appear to have survived their financial crisis after creditors agreed to accept 10p per £1 of debt to allow the club to continue.

The defending champions seem certain to finish bottom after taking only two points from their first 15 games. However, they may be reprieved from the drop after the FA relented on their insistence that the top division be reduced to 16 clubs. Indeed, it has said it would countenance an expansion back to 18, one more than at present.

If only one side qualifies for promotion, as has happened in previous years because of ground criteria, Barry will retain their top-level place.

Mel Thomas

Ever-present...Jimmy Nielsen

Andersson bound for home

Bye-bye Barça...Patrik Andersson.

SWEDEN

FORMER NATIONAL TEAM captain Patrik Andersson appeared set to join Malmo after being released on a free transfer by Barcelona. The Catalan club agreed to let the 32-year-old central defender go on condition he did not sign for any non-Swedish club before June 30.

Andersson, who recently announced his retirement from the national team, endured an injury-plagued stay in Spain.

Signing the defender would cap a hectic buying period for Malmo, who have already captured Polish striker Igor Sypniewski from Halmstads and Brazilian midfielder Afonso Alves from Orgryte.

"Finishing third in the League last season just wasn't good enough for us," said Malmo general manager Hasse Borg. "We intend to step forward and challenge champions Djurgardens next season."

That task has surely been made easier after Djurgardens sold midfield ace Kim Kallstrom to Rennes in France. His replacement is Abgar Barsom, who has returned to the club after a spell with Heerenveen in Holland.

The champions have also signed Hacken's Under-21 defender Tobias Hysen, whose father, Glenn, captained Sweden and played for IFK Gothenburg, Fiorentina and Liverpool.

Pentti Hietanen

DENMARK

Nielsen chalks up a record

GOALKEEPER JIMMY NIELSEN set a Superliga record when playing his 229th consecutive match for AaB Aalborg, at home to leaders Brondby in the final League round of the autumn campaign. Nielsen, once considered the next Peter Schmeichel, has never quite lived up to his early promise. But his reliability has never been in doubt at AaB, who went into the winter break in fifth position after a 1-1 draw with Brondby.

That was a remarkable turnaround from a dismal early season run of only four points from six matches, which led to the sacking of coach Poul Erik Andreasen. Caretaker boss Soren Kusk has transformed the club's fortunes, but now hands over to Swede Erik Hamren ahead of the March restart.

Jim Holden

Nothing to shout about...Galatasaray fans have turned against coach Fatih Terim after enduring a miserable first half of the season

TURKEY

Grim New Year for Gala

IT WILL HAVE been a cheerless New Year's party at Galatasaray. The once undisputed Turkish champions have made their worst start to the season in 26 years, and after 17 League rounds were 14 points adrift of unbeaten leaders Besiktas. They also have to make do with the UEFA Cup after finishing only third in their Champions League group.

The club's charismatic but volatile coach Fatih Terim has come under fire from fans, who are losing patience with his erratic leadership. The glory of a surprise win over Juventus in the Champions League in early December was soon eclipsed by continuing poor League performances, and by the end of the month, with no win in five games, there were calls for him to quit.

After Gala's nine-month unbeaten home run was ended by Trabzonspor in mid-December, chairman Ozhan Canaydin was moved to issue a statement supporting his coach. "I and my colleagues on the board are responsible for the situation we find ourselves in today," he said. "We stand behind Fatih Terim."

However, matters failed to improve. The next week, Gala could only draw with bottom side Elazigspor, and Terim, just back from a 15-day touchline ban, faced further disciplinary action for swearing at the referee.

The coach has failed to find a satisfactory team formation even after 18 months in charge, and critics feel he has been unable to bring out the best in many of his players. Terim himself seems at a loss when attempting to explain Gala's poor run, saying: "Sometimes we play well, but most of the time we don't. I can't say that as a team we inspire much confidence."

Terim's troubles can offer nothing but comfort to Mircea Lucescu, coach of Istanbul rivals Besiktas. Although the Black Eagles were also relegated to the UEFA Cup after a sorry Champions League performance, they have been reigning supreme in the domestic League and were nine points ahead of closest rivals Trabzonspor after 17 weeks.

Besiktas look good for the year ahead, spearheaded as they are by the talented but unorthodox midfielder Sergen Yalcin. Sergen – who has a reputation for being overweight and lazy – even casually scored against Adanaspor while lying on his back.

Suna Erdem

Zahovic back in the frame

SLOVENIA

U-turn...Zlatko Zahovic

ZLATKO ZAHOVIC, the national team's best player, has said he is willing to play for Slovenia after all having announced his international retirement following the Euro 2004 play-off defeat by Croatia.

But observers have suggested this is merely a cynical ploy by the playmaker to discourage moves to reinstate Srecko Katanec as national coach in place of under-fire Bojan Prasnikar. There is bad blood between Zahovic and Katanec, who sent the player home from the 2002 World Cup after a blazing row when Zahovic was substituted during Slovenia's first group game, against Spain.

HIT Gorica were the surprise League leaders at the winter break. The once powerful club struggled in recent seasons because of financial troubles. Now, though, they are back on song under coach Pavel Pinni.

Zdravko Reic

GREECE

Betting body backs football

The state sports betting organisation OPAP has agreed to help Greece's financially-troubled football industry, offering £430,000 to the professional soccer clubs' association immediately, with another £500,000 to follow.

The extra funds will help clubs introduce electronic ticketing and security systems, and partly finance ground improvements.

Grigoris Georgatos has agreed to join Olympiakos for a third spell. The 31-year-old has signed a two-and-a-half-year contract with the champions, whom he first played for in 1996. Georgatos joins from AEK Athens.

Lou Economopoulos

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

Matthaus quits Partizan

As suddenly as he arrived a year ago, Lothar Matthaus left Partizan Belgrade. Allegedly, not even the club's management knew about their coach's plans when, right after the last game of the autumn campaign, Matthaus announced his resignation and new job as national coach of Hungary.

The reasons behind the German's departure have not been specified, though there were rumours of a bad atmosphere between the coach and key players. However, it is most likely that after learning the limits of his team, Matthaus simply came to the conclusion he had achieved as much as he could – the League title and participation in the Champions League group stage. The fact his new wife lives in Budapest may also have been a factor behind the move.

Partizan's 1-1 draw at home to Marseille in their final Champions League game meant they finished bottom of Group F and so failed to qualify even for the UEFA Cup.

In the domestic League, Red Star went into the winter break still three points clear of Partizan after a 1-0 home win over second-placed Sartid Smederevo. Partizan leapfrogged the latter after beating Zeleznik 1-0 away.

To make matters worse for Sartid, coach Ratko Dostanic, considered one of the country's best, surprisingly resigned after he fell out with the club's management. Dostanic has now taken charge of Bulgarian side Slavia Sofia.

Vladimir Novak

CROATIA

Hajduk go top as fans clash

Hajduk Split went into the winter break three points clear of Dinamo Zagreb after beating their arch-rivals 3-1 at home.

The game, all the more important since the top two are well clear of the pack, was played in a fantastic atmosphere but was overshadowed by post-match violence.

Dinamo supporters, being held in the stadium after the match, managed to get on to the pitch, burning flags and other items as they did so.

Then a group of fans on their way back to Zagreb escaped with their lives after their car was ambushed and set alight by Hajduk supporters.

Monaco forward Dado Prso has been named Croatian Footballer of the Year by the *Vecernji List* newspaper.

Zdravko Reic

ISRAEL

Haifa frozen out

Maccabi Haifa went out of the UEFA Cup to Valencia after being forced to play their 'home' leg in the cold of Rotterdam.

Without supporters and unable to cope with the poor pitch at the Sparta stadium, they lost 4-0 on the night and on aggregate, having come away from Spain with a highly creditable 0-0 draw.

The return had originally been due to take place in Izmir, Turkey, because of security worries in Israel. But the spate of suicide bombings in Istanbul prompted UEFA to order a second switch.

At home, Premier League chairmen have threatened that their teams will not play in protest at a lack of income from the Saturday pay-per-view channel introduced in October. Clubs want a dedicated subscription channel.

Ori Lewis

MACEDONIA

Pobeda eclipse Vardar

League leaders Pobeda will meet Napredok in the Cup semi-finals after beating champions Vardar 3-2 on aggregate. Rabotnicki Kometal face Sloga Jugomagnat in the other semi.

Vardar's Cup defeat came during a terrible run of League form that cost them top spot. They were fourth at the winter break, four points behind Pobeda.

Michel Stojmanovski

MALTA

Home drubbing for Heese

Horst Heese got off to a terrible start in his second spell as national coach, his new-look side losing 4-0 at home to an experimental Poland team in a December friendly.

Roderick Briffa (Birkirkara), Gareth Sciberras and Ivan Woods (Pieta Hotspurs), Ian Azzopardi and Claude Mattocks (Floriana) and Antoine Zahra (Hibernians) all made their debuts.

Birkirkara consolidated their League leadership with a 1-0 win over Balzan Youths. This kept them three points clear of champions Sliema Wanderers, who re-signed Malta striker Michael Mifsud after Kaiserslautern released him.

Domenico Aquilina

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Plaudits for Sliskovic

National coach Blaz Sliskovic won a hatful of end-of-year awards having led the team to the brink of Euro 2004 qualification and successfully engineered much-needed ethnic integration within the squad. Sliskovic's main reward, however, is a new contract, until 2006.

Zdravko Reic

Caught cold...Maccabi Haifa (in white) take on Valencia in Rotterdam

Magyars unveil Matthaus

HUNGARY

AT A HUSHED press conference at Budapest's exclusive Kempinski Hotel, German international great Lothar Matthaus was announced as the shock choice as Hungary's new national coach.

The 1990 World Cup-winning captain replaces Imre Gellei, whose term ended with a disappointing fourth-place finish in their Euro 2004 qualifying group. Explaining the reasoning behind Matthaus's appointment, federation president Imre Bozoky said: "Hungary were the teachers of Europe before the 1950s – now it is time to ask them to teach us."

Matthaus, who arrives from Partizan Belgrade after leading them into the Champions League group stage for the first time, has been given a contract until December 2005. His top priority is the tricky but not impossible task of guiding Hungary to the World Cup in his native Germany. The Magyars face Sweden, Croatia, Bulgaria, Iceland and Malta in their qualifying group.

Coincidentally, many of the squad play in Germany's Bundesliga, including midfielder Krisztian Lisztes, in sparkling form for leaders Werder Bremen.

Matthaus's first games in charge will be in February, at an invitation tournament in Cyprus, which also features Romania and Latvia.

Peterjon Cresswell

Yes, it's really me...Lothar Matthaus faces the media on his appointment to Hungary's hot seat

Kleber heads new recruits

Forced in...Kleber claims he was threatened with demotion if he did not join Dynamo

UKRAINE

KYIV DYNAMO WASTED no time in strengthening their squad during the winter break, signing three players. The most high-profile is 20-year-old Brazilian striker Kleber, bought for £1.5million from Sao Paulo. The World Youth Cup star claimed Sao Paulo's directors had threatened to demote him to the junior side if he rejected the move.

The Ukrainian champions also signed ex-Under-21 midfielder Ruslan Bidnenko from Borysfen and forward Maris Verpakovskis from Latvia's Skonto Riga. All three joined on five-year contracts.

Former Kremen and CSKA Kyiv coach Volodymyr Lozinskyi has taken charge of Vorskla Poltava, replacing Oleg Dolmatov. Valentin Khodukin will take charge at Kryvbas until the end of the season.

Dnipro forward Oleh Venhlynskyi is Ukraine's Player of the Year, with his boss, Eugene Kucherevskyi, taking the coaching award.

Oleg Zadernovsky

● **BELORUSSIAN** internationals Valentin Bialkevich and Alexander Khatskevich have both agreed to end their national team boycott following the departure of Eduard Malofeyev as coach. The Kyiv Dynamo pair took exception after Malofeyev accused them of not having a patriotic attitude.

● **GEORGIAN** federation president Merab Jordania has been charged with tax fraud in connection with the transfers of several of his country's international players between 1992 and 1998.

Oleg Zadernovsky

RUSSIA

'Unsinkable' sails on

Vyacheslav Koloskov has been re-elected unopposed as Russian Football Union president for another five-year term despite facing strong criticism over his performance.

The 62-year-old, nicknamed 'Unsinkable', has held the post since the RFU's inception in 1992.

National coach Georgi Yartsev will start his squad's preparations for Euro 2004 with a mid-February tour of Japan, where Russia will play the Olympic team and a local club.

Dmitri Loskov was voted Russia's Player of the Year for the second season in succession. The Lokomotiv Moscow playmaker led his club to the second round of the Champions League and was top scorer in the domestic League with 14 goals.

Victor Gusev

Pop idol...Stilian Petrov

BULGARIA

Petrov takes the prize

NATIONAL TEAM CAPTAIN Stilian Petrov has been voted Bulgarian Player of the Year. The midfielder took the award for his key role in steering Bulgaria to the Euro 2004 finals and his part in club side Celtic's run to the UEFA Cup Final.

Bulgaria coach Plamen Markov won the managerial prize, with Lokomotiv Plovdiv's Martin Kamburov named most promising player.

Levski Sofia have signed defender Stefan Donchev from Spartak Varna and striker Liubomir Liubenov (Marek Dupnitsa) as they prepare to face Liverpool in the UEFA Cup third round.

Serb Ratko Dostanic has left homeland club Sartid Smederevo to replace Atanas Dzhambazkias as coach of Slavia Sofia.

Michael Bowesfield

ROMANIA

Dan's the man

Former Romania defender Dan Petrescu has been named coach of defending champions Rapid Bucharest.

He replaced Mircea Rednic, recently named Romanian Coach of the Year, in a surprise move orchestrated by new Rapid general manager Giovanni Becali. The latter took up his post after giving up his activities as a players' agent and buying 5 per cent of Rapid's shares.

Petrescu arrives from Second Division Sportul Studentesc, who were six points clear at the top of the table, undefeated, at the winter break. Before that, he was assistant coach to Walter Zenga at National Bucharest.

The former Chelsea player wasted no time in signing 22-year-old Victoras Iacob of Otelul Galati as he attempts to build a new team capable of competing on the European stage.

Adrian Mutu picked up the Romanian Player of the Year award for the first time, astonishing his fans back home when he chartered a plane from London to Bucharest to attend the ceremony.

Radu Timofte

POLAND

Krzynowek tops poll

Jacek Krzynowek, who plays for Second Division Nurnberg in Germany, was voted Polish Footballer of the Year by the magazine *Pilka Nozna*.

The 27-year-old, Poland's best player at the 2002 World Cup, returned to action from a serious knee injury last year and once again proved himself a key man for the national team. Krzynowek will join Bayer Leverkusen in the summer.

Gornik Leczna's Jacek Zielinski took the Manager of the Year award after leading his side to fifth in the League at the winter break in their first top-flight campaign. Gornik had been named among the favourites to be relegated this term.

Marcin Nowacki, a 22-year-old midfielder with Odra Wodzislaw, was named Discovery of the Year.

Last season's match-fixing scandal that led to the demotion of Garbarnia Szczakowianka Jaworzno and the promotion of Swit Nowy Dwor is to be re-examined after the Olympic Committee's arbitration tribunal deemed the original FA rulings invalid.

The tribunal, Poland's highest sports authority, said the FA had not been entitled to use "secret key witnesses" during its inquiry into the affair.

Dariusz Kurowski

SLOVAKIA

Shock of the new

Newcomers Banska Bystrica were the surprise League leaders at the winter break, with few pundits having fancied them to even stay up at the start of the season. But coach Ladislav Molnar has built a technically-skilled and committed team, who have successfully combined a solid defence with an open style of attacking play.

Last year's champions MSK Zilina finished the first half of the season in third place having made an impressive recovery from a dreadful start.

Ed Holt

CZECH REPUBLIC

Nedved and Sparta triumphs boost morale

Pavel Nedved's anointment as European Footballer of the Year was hailed as a triumph for Czech football.

The Juventus midfielder, who has not always been a favourite with the national media, became only the second Czech to win the award, following Dukla Prague forward and World Cup finalist Josef Masopust in 1962.

A more surprising boost to national morale was Sparta Prague's progress in the Champions League, which has overshadowed the team's erratic League form.

On a freezing December night in Prague, substitute Marek Kincl's stoppage-time winner against Lazio earned the hosts second place in Group G behind Chelsea.

Kincl has since departed for Russia's Zenit St Petersburg, but Sparta can now look forward to a lucrative second round tie with Milan.

City rivals Slavia finally sacked coach Miroslav Beranek having initially handed him a stay of execution. His replacement is Josef Csaplar, who, with Ladislav Skorpil, led Liberec to the championship in 2002.

Former Czechoslovakia coach Stanislav Griga, most recently in charge at Slovak club Dubnica, has taken over at Liberec. Elsewhere, a poor run of results led to the dismissal of Brno coach Karel Vecera.

Sam Beckwith

ARMENIA

Pyunik stroll to title

Pyunik Yerevan won the championship for the third year running and with some ease, finishing eight points clear of city rivals Banants and still unbeaten.

Banants' Ara Akopyan finished top scorer with 45 goals, smashing the previous League record of 39, set 10 years ago by Arsen Avetisyan of Pyunik.

Akopyan unsurprisingly won the Player of the Year award. Pyunik's 16-year-old prodigy Edgar Manucharyan finished runner-up.

Vladimir Kalinkovich

Cienciano reach high point

Silence is golden...Cienciano players signal to their fans after winning the Sudamericana Cup

SUDAMERICANA CUP

PERUVIAN SIDE CIENCIANO were the surprise winners of the Sudamericana Cup, beating Argentina's River Plate 4-3 on aggregate in the Final.

Cienciano are from the town of Cuzco, 3,600 metres up in the Andes and better known for the nearby Machu Picchu ruins than its football.

The team have no stars, but the players are hard workers – their stamina no doubt helped by the altitude of their club base.

Ironically, they were forced to play the home leg of the Final in Arequipa, 1,240 metres lower than Cuzco, as their own ground did not have the minimum 40,000 capacity required for a continental competition Final.

Cienciano had already caused a shock in reaching the Final after beating Atletico Nacional of Colombia 3-1 on aggregate in the semi-finals. They then held River – admittedly decimated by injuries, suspensions and the absence of three players at the World Youth Cup – to a 3-3 draw in Buenos Aires before winning the return 1-0.

The victory made Cienciano the first Peruvian club to win a South American international trophy.

This was the second edition of the Sudamericana Cup, an event for the top teams from the 10 South American nations. Argentina's San Lorenzo won the first tournament, while next year it is likely to be renamed the Pan-American Cup as Mexican clubs will be participating.

Eric Weil

URUGUAY

Chilavert – vital to the last

FIVE PLAYERS WERE sent off during the overall championship deciding game between Nacional and Penarol as the season came to a dramatic conclusion. Not only that, but Penarol's veteran keeper, Jose Luis Chilavert, set up the only goal of his final game.

Nacional, the opening title winners, were down to 10 men after 10 minutes following the dismissal of Angbwa Benoit. After Joe Bizera had headed closing champions Penarol in front just before half-time – picking up the rebound after a trademark Chilavert free-kick hit the bar – three more Nacional players, plus coach Daniel Carreno and a substitute on the bench, were dismissed, along with Penarol's Nicolas Rotundo.

Chilavert scored four times for Penarol during the season bringing his career total to 64 goals. The 38-year-old Paraguayan, who claimed he played against Nacional with a broken finger, has said he is retiring to spend more time with his family, though he may eventually return as a coach. Earlier, he had expressed a desire to go into Paraguayan politics.

Twelve Nacional players were suspended for between one and four games for their threatening behaviour during the deciding game.

Penarol and Nacional both qualify for the Libertadores Cup, along with Fenix, who won an eight-team special tournament to determine Uruguay's other representatives.

Eric Weil

On top...Pachuca's Alberto Rodriguez

MEXICO

Glory for Pachuca as Tigres blow up

PACHUCA, THE LEAGUE'S oldest team, won their fifth title after opening championship Final opponents Tigres finished the second leg with just eight men.

Pachuca had gone into the match 3-1 ahead from the home first leg, and comfortably held off Tigres with their defensive excellence.

Frustration at their inability to score got the better of the hosts, who had Antonio Sancho, Eduardo Rergis and Irenio Soares sent off. Tigres did score in the final minute, but it was too late to build on.

Pachuca's triumph was the third for coach Victor Manuel Vucetich, who had previously won the title with Leon and Tecos UAG.

Tigres finished the league stage with the best record of all 20 top-flight teams. But their inability to go on to win the title was no surprise. It was the fifth campaign in a row that the team with the best league record had failed to take the championship, and the 11th time in 15 since the 'short league' format was introduced in 1996.

The federation goes anxiously into the new year after several leading club sponsors suggested they may cut their funding. The sponsors are known to be unhappy about the decision to increase the size of the top division, feeling it has led to a downturn in the quality of football and thus the attractiveness of the package as a whole. They also feel the domestic League has been devalued by the increasingly frequent absence during the season of leading players for international club and country tournaments.

Carlos Ramirez

CANADA

Canucks take heart

HOPES OF WORLD CUP qualification, already brightening after the appointment of Frank Yallop as national coach, are even higher following a favourable draw. Canada have been paired with Belize in their first stage tie, while CONCACAF big guns Mexico and the United States will not be encountered until the final group stage.

The Canucks first real test – presuming they beat Belize – will come in the second stage group. There they have to finish in the top two against likely opponents Costa Rica, Honduras and Guatemala to progress to meet the big boys. "We have to make these teams realise that playing in Canada will be a nightmare," says Yallop.

The trouble for the Canadian Soccer Association is that it could have a nightmare of its own. With its huge immigrant population, Canada is one of the few places in the world where the home crowd often cheers louder for opponents than its own. The CSA has a massive marketing job to do, especially since Canadian fans have been forced to follow the national team on television for the past three and a half years. The last home game was in November 2000, against Mexico. The CSA recently moved the team's headquarters from Toronto to Vancouver in order to take them closer to their fan base.

Yallop had his first meeting with his North America-based players at a 12-day training camp in Florida, with a friendly against Barbados scheduled for January 18. But the coach has yet to fix a reunion date with the Europe-based players, who include at least six of his former international team-mates.

Philippe Germain

ROUND-UP

● **LIBERTADORES CUP:** Holders Boca Juniors have been pooled with Colombians Deportivo Cali, Colo Colo of Chile and Bolivar of Bolivia in the group stage of this year's edition.

South America's top club competition will feature 36 teams – four more than last year – divided into nine groups. The winners and five best runners-up qualify for the second round, while the other four runners-up play off for the two remaining knockout stage berths.

Eight Mexican sides are meeting in a pre-qualifying tournament to determine who takes their country's two allotted berths.

● *See World Service, starting page 75, for draw details.*

● **ECUADOR:** LDU Quito won the League for the seventh time by topping the six-team championship play-off group. They will enter the Libertadores Cup along with Barcelona and El Nacional, who finished second and third respectively.

● **COLOMBIA:** Provincial club Tolima won their first League title when surprisingly beating Deportivo Cali in the closing championship Final. The team from Ibague won 4-2 on penalties following a 3-3 aggregate draw. Tolima coach Luis Garcia has now won four Colombian titles, having previously triumphed with America and Millonarios (twice).

Deportivo Cali join Tolima and opening championship winners Once Caldas in the Libertadores Cup as highest aggregate points scorers over the season.

● **BOLIVIA:** The Strongest's closing championship victory was put into doubt when Jorge Wilstermann and Bolivar protested that The Strongest striker Ruben Gigena was ineligible.

● **CHILE:** Cobreloa, from the desert mining town of Calama, became overall champions after adding the closing title to their opening victory. The Desert Foxes beat Colo Colo in the closing Final, winning 2-1 in Santiago after a 2-2 draw in Calama. But victory did not stop Uruguayan coach Luis Garisto from quitting, probably to take the reins at an Argentinian club. Curiously, another Uruguayan, Nelson Acosta, departed Cobreloa after their opening title win, to take over as Bolivia coach.

Former Chile striker Ivan Zamorano, 36, ended his 20-year career by scoring for a World Star XI side in their 5-2 win over a Chilean XI in his farewell game in Santiago.

● **VENEZUELA:** Caracas won the opening championship with two games to spare after beating pacesetters Deportivo Tachira 2-0.

Eric Weil

Grand finale...Chile's Ivan Zamorano salutes the fans after his farewell game

Ugly scenes eclipse Enyimba's historic win

On our way...Nwanna (right) celebrates after putting Enyimba ahead in the first leg

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

ENYIMBA BROKE A 35-year jinx on Nigerian sides when they became the first team from their country to win Africa's premier club competition. But while the second, decisive leg of the Champions League Final – against Egypt's Ismaili – should have been a historic night of celebration, the occasion proved, like last year, another disorganised farce.

Enyimba won the first leg in Aba but should have gone into the return with more than a 2-0 lead. After 25 minutes Ndidi Anumnu's shot hit the woodwork and Emeka Nwanna was on hand to score. Six minutes into the second half, Anumnu slotted in Michael Ochei's cross.

Ismaili's Egyptian Under-23 goalkeeper Mohammed Soibhi kept his side in the game but they were hamstrung by the absence of five key players, two of them at the World Youth Cup in the United Arab Emirates.

All were back for the return in Ismailia, including suspended striker Mohamed Mohsen Abougreisha, who was able to resume his partnership with Dramare Traore which had delivered 14 goals in the tournament.

Hosni Abd Rabou scored from a dubious first-half penalty to reduce the aggregate to 2-1, but then things started getting out of hand. The Nigerians, fearing a fix, spent the rest of the game using spoiling tactics and continually playing the role of victims. Ismaili were not much better and forgot all about football as it became obvious they were not competent enough to break down the towering Nigerian defence.

To compound the problem, the Confederation of African Football had appointed a referee from the Seychelles, Africa's smallest country, to handle its biggest game of the year. Eddy Maillet, for all his promise, had never been under such pressure before and had no idea how to keep control. But if he had taken action against every niggling foul and off-the-ball kick and punch, the game would have turned into an even bigger farce. It was twice halted to let the players cool down after mass brawls, and there was more than 10 minutes of stoppage time.

At the final whistle, an Ismaili official ran off with the trophy and it took 30 minutes before the post-match ceremony could start. Riots outside the stadium involving police and frustrated Egyptian fans caused several injuries.

The scenes were all too reminiscent of last year's Final, when another Egyptian side, Zamalek, beat Morocco's Raja Casablanca by the only goal of the tie in the second leg in Cairo. That game was similarly marred by intermittent flare-ups and ended with players, officials and police all trading punches.

But African soccer never seems to learn its lessons.

Mark Gleeson

● Enyimba will start the defence of their title in the second round of the newly expanded Champions League, which now has two representatives from Africa's 11 most successful countries. The Nigerians will play either Diaraf Dakar of Senegal or the Guinea army club ASFAG in April.

The field includes nine former winners (excluding Enyimba): Canon Yaounde of Cameroon, Al Ahly and Zamalek (Egypt), Asante Kotoko and Hearts of Oak (Ghana), Orlando Pirates (South Africa), Esperance (Tunisia), ASEC Abidjan (Ivory Coast) and Raja Casablanca (Morocco). That list includes every club who have lifted the trophy since 1993.

Runners-up Ismaili will play in the new African Confederation Cup – an amalgamation of the Cup-winners Cup and CAF Cup. They also start in the second round, against either Stade Tunisien or ASC Thies of Senegal.

See World Service, starting page 75, for draws in full.

Put your shirt on me...Obiakor hails his Cup-winning hat-trick

CUP-WINNERS CUP FINAL

Obiakor the star turn for Etoile

NIGERIAN STRIKER Oguchukwu Obiakor sunk his compatriots by scoring a dramatic late winner for Tunisia's Etoile Sahel against Julius Berger in the last African Cup-winners Cup Final.

But it proved a bitter-sweet triumph for coach Ammar Souayeh, who quit in anger after his job was touted elsewhere.

Obiakor struck near the end of the second leg, in Sousse, to complete his hat-trick and hand Etoile the title 3-2 on aggregate as they overcame a 2-0 first leg deficit.

Julius Berger had looked to have one hand on the Cup after their home win in Abeokuta. However, they had not faced Obiakor in that game, due to suspension, and were immediately on the back foot after conceding his first goal only 80 seconds into the return.

Veteran midfielders Zoubeir Baya and Ibrahima Kone had shots blocked but Obiakor, who also scored the decisive goal in the semi-final win over holders Wydad Casablanca, pounced to force the ball home and signal the start of the comeback. Kone and Baya turned the tide for Etoile with their workrate but Obiakor proved the real trump card.

Etoile's Seif Ghezal had an 18th-minute penalty saved but Obiakor levelled the aggregate scores on the hour when he was again first to the rebound after another Baya effort was blocked. The Nigerian completed his treble from a corner three minutes from time.

Souayeh's exit came days later when it became clear his job was to be handed to former Tunisian national team coach Abdelmajid Chetali and Frenchman Rene Lobello, who had been serving as Souayeh's quasi-assistant.

Mark Gleeson

ROUND-UP

CENTRAL AFRICA

● SAO TOME E PRINCIPE coach Jose Ferraz has returned to his native Portugal after reported altercations with players, officials and supporters following the 8-0 World Cup qualifying defeat by Libya in November.

● Cameroon's B team won the inaugural CEMAC regional tournament in Congo, beating Central African Republic 3-2 in the Final.

EAST AFRICA

● Elvis Antoine and Rajesh Gunesh have been named as the new co-coaches of MAURITIUS. They take over from caretaker Akbar Patel.

NORTH AFRICA

● Manuel Jose has been appointed coach of EGYPT'S Al Ahly following the dismissal of his Portuguese compatriot Toni. Jose is in his second spell with Al Ahly, having led them to victory in the 2001 African Champions League.

The national team won a four-nation tournament in Bahrain in mid-December with victories over Kenya, the hosts and Iraq.

● Wydad Casablanca of MOROCCO have replaced coach Ivica Todorov with Swiss Michel Decastel following the club's semi-final exit from the African Cup-winners Cup. Romanian Aurel Teclanu has taken over at Maghreb Fes.

● Entente Sebkhawon won the MAURITANIA Cup, beating ACS Ksar in the Final.

● Frenchman Herve Revelli has taken over as coach of MC Alger in ALGERIA.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

● ANGOLA have confirmed Oliveira Goncalves as national coach. Goncalves, previously in charge of the Under-23 and Under-20 teams, had taken temporary charge of the seniors for the second leg of their World Cup preliminary round tie against Chad, which Angola won 2-0 at home to go through on away goals. Their 3-1 first leg defeat led to the dismissal of veteran Brazilian Ismael Kurtz.

● AmaZulu won their first League title in ZIMBABWE, pipping Bulawayo rivals Highlanders by a point. CAPS United goalkeeper Energy Murambadoro was named Footballer of the Year, while AmaZulu's Luke Masomere took the coaching award.

● German Werner Bickelhaupt lasted just two matches in charge of SWAZILAND, being sacked after the World Cup exit to the Cape Verde Islands.

● Maxaquene won the MOZAMBIQUE League after beating second-placed Costa do Sol 1-0 in the final match.

WEST AFRICA

● Ivorian Martial Yeo has lost his job as NIGER coach after a 7-0 aggregate defeat by Algeria in the World Cup preliminary round.

● Mogas '90 beat Soleil FC to win the BENIN Cup Final, Christophe de Souza scoring the only goal four minutes into extra-time.

● Ralf Zumdick is quitting as GHANA coach after only a few months to join Hamburg's coaching staff.

Mark Gleeson

Prize...Egypt skipper Hadi Khasahaba receives the Bahrain trophy

Mahdavikia scoops player prize

AFC AWARDS

Prize guy...Mahdavikia

IRAN AND HAMBURG midfielder Mehdi Mahdavikia has been named Asian Player of the Year for 2003. The former Bochum and Pirouzi man beat off the challenges of Uzbekistan's Maxim Shatskikh and Therdsak Chaiman of Thailand to become the third Iranian – after Ali Daei and Khodadad Azizi – to scoop the honour.

"There are so many top-quality players in Asia, and to be considered the best among all of them is just incredible," said Mahdavikia at the Kuala Lumpur award ceremony in December.

Mahdavikia starred for Hamburg last season and also helped Iran win the AFC/OFC Cup against New Zealand.

Japan's Yoshito Okubo was named the continent's best young player, with Cha Kyung-bok of South Korean side Songnam Ilhwa named coach of the year for leading his side to a third successive domestic title.

Michael Church

EAST ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Koreans on top

South Korea won the inaugural East Asian Championship, holding Japan to a 0-0 draw in the final game at the International stadium, Yokohama, to claim the title. Humberto Coelho's side went into the final game needing just a draw to win on goals scored after the Japanese and Koreans had recorded wins over both Hong Kong and China.

South Korea kicked off with a laboured 3-1 win over Hong Kong, while Tatsuhiko Kubo scored his first two goals for Japan as they beat China 2-0.

Korea and Japan both won their second games, 1-0, leaving their last-day clash as the title decider. Japan's hopes were dealt a blow when Yoshito Okubo was sent off for a second bookable offence after just 17 minutes. With just 10 men, Zico's side was unable to rack up the victory they required.

"It is not easy to play against an undermanned team," said Coelho. "We built our strategy to win the title and we succeeded."

Michael Church

Honour for Emerson

JAPAN

URAWA REDS' STRIKER Emerson was named the J.League Player of the Year at the December awards ceremony, becoming the fifth Brazilian to take the prize in its 11-year history.

The 22-year-old won the honour after scoring 18 goals during the two League stages and twice in Reds' 4-0 League Cup Final victory over Kashima Antlers in November, their first silverware.

Former Japan boss Takeshi Okada won the Manager of the Year award after leading Yokohama F Marinos to the First and Second Stage titles in his first season at the club. Marinos midfielder Daisuke Nasu was named best new player.

Despite Reds' League Cup triumph, the club have dispensed with manager Hans Ooft and head coach Wim Jansen. Ooft is replaced by German Guido Buchwald, a former player at the club. The 42-year-old, who has recently held advisory positions at Karlsruhe and Stuttgart, has signed an 11-month deal. Ex-Kyoto Purple Sanga boss Gert Engels takes over from Jansen.

Mike Plastow & Michi Ishijima

ROUND-UP

Gold...Thailand (blue) beat Vietnam

- THAILAND won a record sixth consecutive South-east Asian Games gold medal with a golden goal victory over hosts Vietnam in the Final in Hanoi. The win means coach Roberto Carvalho – who replaced Englishman Peter Withe in early November – will retain his job for the first phase of World Cup qualifying.

- Al Riffa lifted the BAHRAIN FA Cup after a 3-1 win over defending champions Busaiteen in the Final.

- Ex-SOUTH KOREA coach Cha Bum-kun has taken over as head coach at former Asian club champions Suwon Bluewings, replacing Kim Ho. Meanwhile, Lee Jang-soo, assistant coach when Ilhwa Chunma won the Asian Club Championship in the mid-1990s, has taken over at Chunnam Dragons. Lee previously coached Chinese side Chongqing. The K-League's newest team will be called Incheon United. The name was decided upon by fans in an internet poll.

- CHINESE side Bayi have been disbanded after 52 years as part of a cost-cutting programme by the army, who funded the club. Former Rangers and Hamburg midfielder Jorg Albertz, currently with Shanghai Shenhua, was named China's Player of the Year.

- Manang Marshyangdi lifted NEPAL'S Budhasubba Gold Cup after a 1-0 win over arch-rivals Mahendra Police Club in the Final.

- Dempo continued their unbeaten run in INDIA as they came from 2-0 down to beat East Bengal 3-2 and stay top of the League.

- Pas went above Zob-Ahan to top the IRANIAN League after beating Esteghlal 1-0.

- Kyiv Dynamo forward Maxim Shatskikh has been voted UZBEKISTAN'S Player of the Year.

- South Melbourne swept to the top of the table in AUSTRALIA, taking a four-point lead over champions Perth Glory with the regular season just past the halfway stage. Bottom side Auckland Kingz have replaced coach Ken Dugdale with another Englishman, Tommy Mason, the former Brighton and Fulham defender.

- In FIJI, Ba have been stripped of their League title after fielding an unregistered player in a top-of-the-table clash with the national Olympic selection. Ba had won the game 1-0, but it was then awarded to the Olympians, who thus finished two points ahead of the Blacks in the revised League table.

- Koloale swept all before them to win the SOLOMON ISLANDS' national club championship. They beat Auki Kingz 4-0 in the Final, and scored 37 goals without reply in their five games. Marist won the Honiara Cup, beating Laugu in the Final.

- Nikao thwarted Tupapa's quest for a clean sweep in the COOK ISLANDS, defeating their arch-rivals 3-1 in the Knockout Cup Final.

- Tafea won the Port Vila League, VANUATU'S premier competition, for the 10th successive year, though they struggled to beat Seveners, 1-0, in the Grand Final.

Michael Church, Paul Moon, Azam Mahmood & Oleg Zadernovsky

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TOMORROW'S STARS TODAY

Tommy BECHMANN

Blond bombshell...Bechmann shows his fighting spirit as he holds off Ibra Kebe during Esbjerg's UEFA Cup clash with Moscow Spartak earlier this season

Euro 2004 beckons for Denmark's 'new Elkjaer'

WHAT THEY LOVE about Tommy Bechmann in Denmark is that he is a real striker – a forward blessed with real pace, a ferocious shot, and a natural competitive fighting spirit.

If he reminds them of anyone from the great Dynamite era of Danish football it is Preben Elkjaer, the bullish leader of the line who was such a perfect foil for Michael Laudrup. And if Bechmann comes anywhere near to matching the career of Elkjaer, he will be some player.

The potential is there, already spotted by Bundesliga club Bochum, who have signed him up for next season from Esbjerg – and by the coaches of all 12 Superliga clubs in Denmark, who voted him the best player of the autumn.

Among them was Laudrup himself, coach of Brondby, who says: "With so many young players you see their form go up and down. But not with Tommy. He has kept on the same high level, and that's a fine achievement for a lad of his age."

Bechmann was top scorer in the first half of the League campaign, netting 13 goals in 19 games as Esbjerg pushed leaders Brondby hard. His overall record at the club is 26 goals in 55 matches, while for the Danish Under-21 team it is an impressive 11 goals in 15 games. Inevitably, that has sparked speculation that Bechmann might be drafted into Denmark's Euro 2004 squad, especially with centre-forward stalwart Ebbe Sand in apparent decline.

The 22-year-old seems certain to be given a chance in forthcoming friendly matches, since an injection of speed and fire is exactly what the Danish attack requires.

"I haven't thought about it really," is Bechmann's response to the conjecture. "It's clear to me you have a better chance to play for Denmark if you play in a foreign league and do well. But if the call does come for Euro 2004 you can be sure I will put my whole heart into the job. That's the way I am. If something goes wrong, I'll just work harder to put it right."

Again, this is an echo of Elkjaer. You can't manufacture a never-say-die character; but you can relish him. The Danes certainly do, and it doesn't hinder the development of his profile that he sports curly blond hair and a wispy moustache and goatee beard.

One man sure Bechmann will go all the way is national Under-21 coach Flemming Serristlev, who says: "Tommy is the kind of striker fans love. He's fast, tough and has a cannonball shot. If he misses a chance, he doesn't worry because he totally believes he will score with the next one."

Sounds encouraging, doesn't it?

Jim Holden

FACT FILE

Club Esbjerg
Country Denmark
Born December 22, 1981
Previous clubs IK Skovbakken, FC Aarhus

Pierre-Alain FRAU

Speedy Sochaux forward in the fast lane for a France cap

SOCHAUX'S FAST-IMPROVING forward Pierre-Alain Frau has suddenly entered the frame for a France call-up following the five-match competitive international ban on Auxerre striker Djibril Cisse after his dismissal in an Under-21 game.

Frau, a former Under-21 player himself, has been cutting a dash for Sochaux all season, powering them into the UEFA Cup third round and in the hunt for a Champions League place in the domestic championship. He thoroughly deserves to be bracketed with the likes of Sidney Govou and Olivier Kapo as potential back-ups for Thierry Henry and David Trezeguet at Euro 2004.

Frau, known by his initials, PAF, is a composed finisher with either foot, striking the ball with a minimum of back-lift. He also creates chances for others with skilful bursts down the right flank, and it is his speed that makes him especially dangerous. As a counter-attacker, he has few peers.

The forward, who joined Sochaux as a 10-year-old, is the latest luxury model off the club's renowned production line. He scored a dozen times to help Sochaux win promotion to the top flight in 2001 and then netted another 14 as the club confounded the critics by establishing themselves in the top 10 of the elite.

But last season was one of frustration. An ankle injury kept Frau out for the first two months, and even when he did return he seemed off the pace. "For a long time I struggled to rediscover my best form," he recalls. "But in the second half of the season I began to feel like my old self. The bad times make you appreciate the good moments even more."

And there should be plenty of the latter yet to come for PAF.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

Club Sochaux
Country France
Born April 15, 1980, in Montbeliard
Honours French Second Division 2001

Andres MENDOZA

Swaggering Brugge front-man blowing hot and cold for Peru

WHEN SOUTH AMERICA'S World Cup qualification campaign resumes in March, Peru know which version of Andres Mendoza they want: the fleet-footed deadly finisher of the first two rounds, not the leaden-footed lumbering figure of the last two. The gifted striker, however, gives few guarantees.

Mendoza is from Chincha, a coastal town which is a centre of Afro-Peruvian music – hypnotic and capable of soaring to exhilarating peaks, rather like the forward's football. But he has always danced to his own beat. Four years ago Mendoza was slung out of the Olympic qualifying squad after refusing to sing the national anthem. He has also been caught up in disciplinary problems with both the senior national team and his Belgian side, Club Brugge. On the field, he made a scoring start to his full international career – in a friendly against Ecuador in February 1999 – but then failed to deliver during the 2002 World Cup qualifiers, as Peru scored just 14 goals in 18 games.

However, in the past few months Mendoza has at times attacked with a pace, power and swagger worthy of his pretensions to be the Peruvian Ronaldo. After scoring in both his country's first two World Cup qualifiers, he hit a stunning goal to give Brugge a shock win away to Milan in the UEFA Champions League. "I think it will be shown on TV all over the world," was Mendoza's immediate reaction. Once the euphoria had faded, he set about campaigning for a move, saying: "It's one of the best moments in my career. But my big dream is to play in one of the strongest leagues in the world."

The Belgian champions might well find Mendoza hard to control in the coming months; Peru can only hope that opposing defenders find him even harder to handle when World Cup qualification resumes.

Tim Vickery

FACT FILE

Club Club Brugge (Blg)
Country Peru
Born April 26, 1978, in Chincha
Previous club Sporting Cristal
International debut February 1999, v Ecuador
International caps 25 (6 goals)
Honours Peruvian championship 1996; Belgian Cup 2002; Belgian League 2003

TIAGO

Benfica all-action midfielder gunning for a Euro 2004 place

ALTHOUGH DISAPPOINTED THAT a move to Barcelona fell through this summer, talented young Benfica midfielder Tiago might now be inclined to think all has turned out for the best. While fellow Portugal Under-21 stars Helder Postiga, Hugo Viana and Ricardo Quaresma have often found themselves on the bench after moves to Tottenham, Newcastle and Barcelona respectively, Tiago is a first choice in central midfield for Benfica. He has thus been in a far better position to press his full international claims.

"To be part of Euro 2004 is my ultimate aim for the season, and while many other players have the same idea, I'm very hopeful," says Tiago, who hails from the northern coastal town of Viana do Castelo. "I'd love to have the chance to show what I can do. The responsibility does not frighten me. I like being called a key player for Benfica and having to live up to it." No wonder Portugal boss Luiz Felipe Scolari was so keen to give Tiago his first full cap early last season.

Often described as combining the grit of ex-Portugal captain Paulo Sousa and the flair of attacking midfield star Rui Costa, the youngster has built his reputation on his all-round ability. Tiago can put his energy and ball-winning capacity to good use in front of the defence, but is just as comfortable when pushed further forward, dictating play with his accurate passing and vision. Furthermore, he has added finishing to his repertoire since leaving Sporting Braga for Benfica in January 2002. He scored just four goals in two and a half years in the Braga first team, but last season hit 13 League goals for Benfica.

He says his dream is to play in Spain or England. With an affordable £6million price-tag on his head and the likes of Arsenal and Valencia said to be filing reports on him, he may get his wish soon.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

- **Club** Benfica
- **Country** Portugal
- **Born** May 2, 1981, in Viana do Castelo
- **Previous club** Sporting Braga
- **International debut** November 2002, v Scotland
- **International caps** 5 (0 goals)

Robin VAN PERSIE

Sharp-tongued whizzkid who must let his feet do the talking

THE WORD ENIGMA could have been invented for Feyenoord and Dutch Under-21 whizzkid Robin Van Persie. Although hugely talented, the left-sided midfielder does tend to fluctuate between the sublime and the downright ordinary, while his mood swings and sharp tongue are notorious.

In 2001-02, just weeks into his professional career, he clashed with striker Pierre Van Hooijdonk over who should take the free-kicks, he has been publicly critical of his team-mates, and was banished to the sidelines for a spell by coach Bert Van Marwijk because of his poor attitude. This term, Van Persie has been at the eye of another storm. With his contract due to expire in summer 2005, Feyenoord had been hoping to negotiate an extension. However, the 20-year-old stunned the club with his wage demands and his insistence that a £3million release clause be inserted into any new deal. "Financially, we cannot offer any more," said technical director Rob Baan. "Only Real Madrid could pay what he wants."

The subsequent sacking of Baan and the announcement that Van Marwijk would be leaving the club at the end of the season is unlikely to change the Van Persie situation. After losing Jon Dahl Tomasson to Milan on a Bosman free in 2002, Feyenoord have learnt their lesson. They will do whatever it takes to receive a fee for the midfielder.

When Van Persie does get his act together, he is something very special. For example, his crossing ability and accuracy of pass were key to Feyenoord's 2002 UEFA Cup Final triumph. Yet he is still too inconsistent. Perhaps a positional change would help. Many believe he would be better suited to a central playmaking role, arguing he has more than a little of the great former Feyenoord number 10 Wim Van Hanegem about him. It might be a worthwhile move.

Nick Bidwell

FACT FILE

- **Club** Feyenoord
- **Country** Holland
- **Born** August 6, 1983, in Rotterdam
- **Previous club** Excelsior
- **Honours** UEFA Cup 2002

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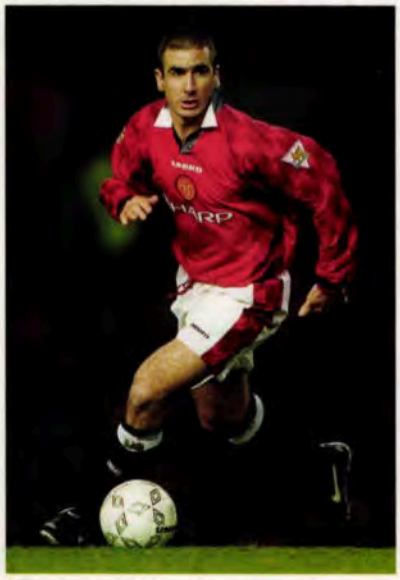

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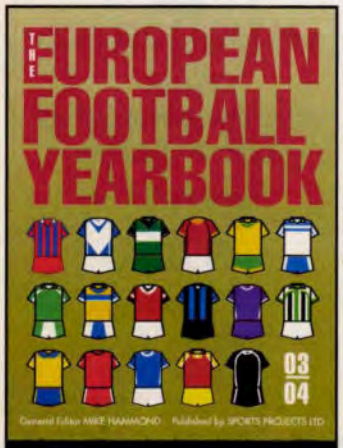

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Deadlock...Boca's Tevez tussles with Cafu of Milan during the World Club Cup Final in Yokohama

2003 WORLD CLUB CUP

Boca on the spot

South Americans triumph on penalties in Yokohama. Keir Radnedge reports

BOCA JUNIORS ARE the first South American club to have launched their own television channel. When news items to that effect popped up in the Italian sports press the response was disdainful. The suits of Serie A have grown accustomed to looking down their noses at their cousins across the Atlantic and south of the equator.

But pride goes before a fall. Boca coach Carlos Bianchi took enormous satisfaction in making just that point after the Argentinians regained the World Club Cup and kept South America's nose in front by 22-20 in the overall history of a contentious event.

It was not that Milan took the task in Yokohama too lightly. They sent an advance guard of seven senior players out at the start of the week even though that meant fielding a reserve-based team in the Champions League against Celta Vigo in midweek.

When that team duly lost, coach Carlo Ancelotti might have felt a shiver of apprehension run down his spine. But that did not appear to be the case. The truth about Milan – and exposed by Boca – is that they are not quite as good as they think they are.

Would they have edged the Champions League Final last May had Juventus enjoyed the services of Pavel Nedved? Milan rode their luck that night at Old Trafford. But luck blows in the wind, and in Yokohama it switched in Boca's favour. Those who live by the penalty...and so on.

European clubs, federations and officials continue to judge South American football in European terms; in terms of youth academies, coaching investment, formalities. But the raw, natural, 'hungry fighter' ambition still brings Argentina, Brazil and the rest a certain advantage in hand-to-hand combat.

Of course, Milan had their selection problems. The travelling media made plenty out of the absence through injury of central defender Alessandro Nesta. But that is the price every busy club pay for success, and Milan certainly had a matchless track record in terms of event experience. The *rossoneri* had won in 1969, 1989 and 1990, and lost in 1963, 1993 and 1994, while skipper Paolo Maldini was making a record fifth appearance in the intercontinental duel – he made his debut in 1989 when Milan beat Atletico Nacional of Colombia 1-0.

Boca boss Bianchi was far more cautious about what his team could and could not do. He had his own inner confidence born of his two previous World Club Cup

Fist fight...Boca keeper Abbondanzieri saves from Milan goalscorer Tomasson

victories – with Boca, over Real Madrid, in 2000, and with Velez Sarsfield, over Milan, in 1994.

As midfielder Diego Cagna said of Bianchi: "He inspires confidence in his players so we can go out and give 100 per cent to the job we have to do on the pitch. Hopefully, that will be enough."

It was – though not without various scares along the way in front of the 66,000 crowd. Denmark striker Jon Dahl Tomasson put Milan ahead in the 24th minute, reading Andrea Pirlo's through pass before the defence and gliding a shot beneath keeper Roberto Abbondanzieri. But Boca struck back within five minutes through man-of-the-match Matias Donnet after Milan keeper Dida could not hold a flick from Pedro Iarley.

Milan chances

Milan had more chances. Straight after Boca's equaliser Kaka smacked a post with a right-foot dipping shot from the edge of the penalty area, and then Maldini was denied by Abbondanzieri's reflexes from close range on the hour.

"I had the impression in the last half-hour and then in extra-time that Milan were hanging on for the penalties," said Bianchi, though that resolution would have been unnecessary had substitute Carlos Tevez – who had snubbed the World Youth Cup to be in Yokohama – been inches lower with a left-foot shot in stoppage time.

So the World Club Cup was decided on a shoot-out for only the fourth time in its 42 editions. Old Trafford luck now deserted Milan. Pirlo, Clarence Seedorf and 'Billy' Costacurta missed for Milan before Raul Cascini shot Boca's winner and honoured Bianchi as the first coach to win the world club title three times.

Ancelotti, to be fair, was gracious in defeat, saying: "Their defenders closed us down quickly and their goalkeeper made some terrific saves. We are usually so reliable at penalties but this time we just couldn't complete the job."

Bianchi responded in kind. "Milan are a quality side," he said, "but I never saw any reason to fear them. I think we were more aggressive on the attack when we had the chance – and we were even the more aggressive when it came to taking penalties. But then, we had been preparing for this match for five months. I think it's different for the Europeans with their more cluttered seasons. They find it difficult to focus."

Dec 14 - International stadium, Yokohama

Boca Juniors 1 (Donnet 29)

Milan 1 (Tomasson 24)

Aet. **HT:** 1-1. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 66,757. **Ref:** Ivanov (Rus)

Boca 3-1 on pens

BOCA: Abbondanzieri - Perea, Schiavi, Burdisso, Rodriguez - Donnet, Cascini, Battaglia, Cagna - Barros Schelotto (Tevez 73), Iarley.

MILAN: Dida - Cafu, Costacurta, Maldini, Pancaro - Gattuso (Ambrosini 102), Pirlo, Seedorf, Kaka (Rui Costa 78) - Tomasson (Inzaghi 60), Shevchenko.

WORLD YOUTH CUP – RESULTS

In the United Arab Emirates

Group A

Nov 27 - Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates 1 (Al-Wehaibi 72)
Slovakia 4 (Brezinsky 5, Halenar 23, Cech 48, Holosko 81)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 46,000. **Ref:** Elizondo (Arg)

Nov 28 - Abu Dhabi
Panama 0
Burkina Faso 1 (Bance 81)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,500. **Ref:** Rosetti (Ita)

Dec 1 - Abu Dhabi
Burkina Faso 1 (Zongo 6)
Slovakia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 3,500. **Ref:** Al-Delawar (Bhn)
Sent off: Panandetiguiri (Burkina Faso) 87min

Dec 1 - Abu Dhabi
Panama 1 (Gun 36)
United Arab Emirates 2 (Ahmed pen 18, Hamad 80)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Sent off: Gomez (Panama) 29min

Dec 4 - Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates 0
Burkina Faso 0
Att: 13,000. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
Sent off: M Abdulla (UAE) 86min

Dec 4 - Abu Dhabi
Slovakia 1 (Pecovsky 49)
Panama 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Benouza (Alg)
Sent off: Solis (Panama) 69min

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Burkina Faso	3	2	1	0	2	0	7
Slovakia	3	2	0	1	5	2	6
UAE	3	1	1	1	3	5	4
Panama	3	0	0	3	1	4	0

Group B

Nov 28 - Sharjah
Argentina 2 (Fernandez 50, 74)
Spain 1 (Gabi 25)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Archundia (Mex)

Nov 28 - Sharjah
Uzbekistan 2 (Innomov 18, Geinrih 63)
Mali 3 (Diarra 4, Berthe 51, B Coulibaly 90)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Souza (Bra)

Dec 1 - Sharjah
Mali 0
Spain 2 (Juanfran 16, Sergio Garcia pen 77)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 6,500. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
Sent off: M Bagayoko (Mali) 79min

Dec 1 - Sharjah
Uzbekistan 1 (Geinrih 4)
Argentina 2 (Fernandez 70, Cavenaghi pen 90)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,500. **Ref:** A Diouf (Sen)
Sent off: Innomov (Uzbekistan) 54min

Dec 4 - Sharjah
Argentina 3 (Ferreyra 13, Herrera 26, D Diakite og 32)
Mali 1 (Berthe pen 48)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Sent off: Eberto (Argentina) 46min; Kone (Mali) 78min

Dec 4 - Sharjah
Spain 1 (Iniesta 15)
Uzbekistan 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Argentina	3	3	0	0	7	3	9
Spain	3	2	0	1	4	2	6
Mali	3	1	0	2	4	7	3
Uzbekistan	3	0	0	3	3	6	0

Group C

Nov 28 - Dubai
Brazil 2 (Daniel Carvalho 56, Nilmar 84)
Canada 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 13,150. **Ref:** Iturralde Gonzalez (Spa)

Nov 28 - Dubai
Czech Republic 1 (Limbersky 24)
Australia 1 (McDonald 49)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,200. **Ref:** A Diouf (Sen)

Dec 1 - Dubai
Australia 2 (Brosque 12, McKay 54)
Canada 1 (Hume 33)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 8,200. **Ref:** Kwon (SKo)

Dec 1 - Dubai
Czech Republic 1 (Limbersky 34)
Brazil 1 (Adailton 37)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 12,500. **Ref:** Archundia (Mex)

Dec 4 - Dubai
Brazil 2 (Juninho 75, Dudu 87)
Australia 3 (Danze 31, 37, Dilevski 47)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Rosetti (Ita)

Dec 4 - Dubai
Canada 1 (Hume 80)
Czech Republic 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Elizondo (Arg)
Sent off: Knakal (Czech Republic) 63min

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Australia	3	2	1	0	6	4	7
Brazil	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
Canada	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
Czech Republic	3	0	2	1	2	3	2

Group D

Nov 29 - Dubai
Colombia 0
Egypt 0
Att: 11,000. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)

Nov 29 - Dubai
Japan 1 (Sakata 54)
England 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Stott (USA)

Dec 2 - Dubai
England 0
Egypt 1 (Motab 74)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Maidin (Sin)

Dec 2 - Dubai
Japan 1 (Sakata 75)
Colombia 4 (De la Cuesta 35, Castrillon 43, Aguilar 65, Rivas 90)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 7,200. **Ref:** Breeze (Aus)

Dec 5 - Dubai
Colombia 0
England 0
Att: 9,210. **Ref:** Al-Delawar (Bhn)

Dec 5 - Dubai
Egypt 0
Japan 1 (Hirayama 79)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 11,800. **Ref:** Archundia (Mex)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Japan	3	2	0	1	3	4	6
Colombia	3	1	2	0	4	1	5
Egypt	3	1	1	1	1	1	4
England	3	0	1	2	0	2	1

Group E

Nov 29 - Al Ain
Saudi Arabia 1 (Al-Mahyani 49)
Rep Ireland 2 (Elliott 19, 77)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 9,055. **Ref:** Breeze (Aus)

Nov 29 - Al Ain
Mexico 1 (De Nigris 85)
Ivory Coast 2 (Tohoua 19, Kone pen 58)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 6,350. **Ref:** Kwon (SKo)

Dec 2 - Al Ain
Ivory Coast 2 (Kone pen 12, 67)
Rep Ireland 2 (Paisley 36, Elliott 74)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 10,265. **Ref:** Busacca (Swi)
Sent off: Yeboah (Ivory Coast) 76min

Dec 2 - Al Ain
Mexico 1 (Pinto 30)
Saudi Arabia 1 (Majrasghi 15)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 10,950. **Ref:** Stott (USA)

Dec 5 - Al Ain
Saudi Arabia 0
Ivory Coast 0
Att: 10,370. **Ref:** Kwon (SKo)

Dec 5 - Al Ain
Rep Ireland 2 (Paisley 35, Kelly 85)
Mexico 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 9,230. **Ref:** Souza (Bra)
Sent off: Palacios (Mexico) 44min; Potter (Rep Ireland) 44min

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rep Ireland	3	2	1	0	6	3	7
Ivory Coast	3	1	2	0	4	3	5
Saudi Arabia	3	0	2	1	2	3	2
Mexico	3	0	1	2	2	5	1

Group F

Nov 29 - Abu Dhabi
Paraguay 1 (Dos Santos 6)
United States 3 (E Johnson 53, Magee 68, Convey 81)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 3,500. **Ref:** Maidin (Sin)

Nov 29 - Abu Dhabi
South Korea 2 (Lee Ho-jin 51, Lee Jong-min 70)
Germany 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Benouza (Alg)

Dec 2 - Abu Dhabi
Germany 3 (Huth 47, Trochowski 60, Kneissl 63)
United States 1 (Whitbread 77)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Souza (Bra)

Dec 2 - Abu Dhabi
South Korea 0
Paraguay 1 (Velazquez 14)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Rosetti (Ita)

Dec 5 - Abu Dhabi
Paraguay 2 (D Lopez 39, Haedo Valdez 57)
Germany 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 6,000. **Ref:** Iturralde Gonzalez (Spa)

Dec 5 - Abu Dhabi
United States 2 (E Johnson pen 13, pen 24)
South Korea 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Breeze (Aus)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
United States	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
Paraguay	3	2	0	1	4	3	6
South Korea	3	1	0	2	2	3	3
Germany	3	1	0	2	3	5	3

Top two from each group plus the four best third-placed sides qualified for second round

Second round

Dec 8 - Abu Dhabi
Japan 2 (Sakata 82, 105 - golden goal)
South Korea 1 (Choi Sung-kuk 38)
Aet. **HT:** 0-1. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 5,500.
Ref: Elizondo (Arg)

Dec 8 - Abu Dhabi
Burkina Faso 0
Canada 1 (Simpson 59)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Kwon (SKo)

Dec 8 - Dubai
Argentina 2 (Cavenaghi 27, 110 - golden goal)
Egypt 1 (Metwaly 42)
Aet. **HT:** 1-1. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 10,800.
Ref: Busacca (Swi)

Dec 8 - Dubai
United States 2 (Mapp 7, E Johnson pen 43)
Ivory Coast 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 3,210. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
Sent off: Toure (Ivory Coast) 45min

Dec 9 - Sharjah
Brazil 2 (Dudu 83, 95 - golden goal)
Slovakia 1 (Sebo 61)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 12,800.
Ref: Iturralde Gonzalez (Spa)
Sent off: Kopunek (Slovakia) 90min

Dec 9 - Sharjah
Australia 0
United Arab Emirates 1 (Matar 89)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 13,500. **Ref:** Souza (Bra)

Dec 9 - Al Ain
Paraguay 0
Spain 1 (Sergio Garcia 66)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 9,250. **Ref:** Archundia (Mex)

Dec 9 - Al Ain
Rep Ireland 2 (Doyle 85, McCarthy 90)
Colombia 3 (Perea 11, Montano 70, Carrillo 104 - golden goal)
Aet. **HT:** 0-1. **90mins:** 2-2. **Att:** 6,860.
Ref: De Bleeckere (Blg)

Quarter-finals

Dec 12 - Abu Dhabi
Canada 1 (Hume 53)
Spain 2 (Iniesta 35, Arizmendi 95 - golden goal)
Aet. **HT:** 0-1. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 15,000.
Ref: Souza (Bra)
Sent off: Vitolo (Spain) 65min

Dec 12 - Abu Dhabi
United States 1 (Convey 59)
Argentina 2 (Mascherano 90, Cavenaghi pen 100 - golden goal)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 15,500.
Ref: Iturralde Gonzalez (Spa)

Dec 12 - Dubai
Colombia 1 (Montano 14)
United Arab Emirates 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 13,000. **Ref:** Elizondo (Arg)

Dec 12 - Dubai
Japan 1 (Hirayama 89)
Brazil 5 (Daniel Carvalho 2, 13, Kleber 15, Nilmar 34, 90)
HT: 0-4. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)

Semi-finals

Dec 15 - Abu Dhabi
Brazil 1 (Dudu 65)
Argentina 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 16,000. **Ref:** Archundia (Mex)
Brazil: Jefferson - Daniel, Alcides Eduardo, Adailton, Carlos Alberto, Daniel Carvalho (Dagoberto 90), Dudu, Nilmar (Andrezinho 57), Kleber, Adriano (Gabriel 87), Juninho.
Argentina: Eberto - Ferreyra, Romero, Mascherano, Fernandez, Zabaleta (Montillo 74), Colace, Cavenaghi, Carrusca (Herrera 69), Garcia, Cangele.

Dec 15 - Dubai
Spain 1 (Iniesta pen 86)
Colombia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 5,700. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Spain: Riesgo - Pena, Carlos Garcia, Melli, Iniesta, Sergio Garcia, Bouzon, Gabi, Juanfran (Arizmendi 75), Pina (Gavilan 78), Tello.
Colombia: Landazuri - De la Cuesta, Pachon, Perea, Montano (Carrillo 89), Fawcett, Aguilar, Briceno (Araujo 62), Anchico, Castrillon, Rivas.

Third-place play-off

Dec 19 - Abu Dhabi
Colombia 2 (Carrillo 16, Castrillon 62)
Argentina 1 (Ferreyra 45)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Breeze (Aus)
Colombia: Landazuri - De la Cuesta, Pachon, Perea (Guarin 77), Otalvaro (Gonzalez 87), Fawcett (Arizala 57), Aguilar, Anchico, Castrillon, Carrillo, Rivas.
Argentina: Eberto - Rodriguez, Ferreyra, Fernandez, Zabaleta, Colace (Sosa 79), Cavenaghi, Carrusca (Montillo 56), Garcia, Cardozo, Herrera (Cangele 55).

Final

Dec 19 - Zayed Sports City stadium, Abu Dhabi
Spain 0
Brazil 1 (Fernandinho 87)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Rosetti (Ita)
Spain: Riesgo - Pena, Carlos Garcia, Melli, Vitolo, Iniesta, Sergio Garcia, Bouzon, Gabi (Manu 88), Juanfran, Pina (Gavilan 70). *Sent off: Melli 4min.*
Brazil: Jefferson - Daniel, Alcides Eduardo, Adailton, Daniel Carvalho (Andrezinho 90), Dudu, Nilmar (Dagoberto 64), Kleber, Adriano, Juninho (Fernandinho 70), Jardel. *Sent off: Fernandinho 90min.*

WORLD YOUTH CUP – SQUADS

ARGENTINA

1 Gustavo EBERTO (G, Boca Juniors)
2 Gonzalo RODRIGUEZ (D, San Lorenzo)
3 Osmar FERREYRA (D, River Plate)
4 Mauricio ROMERO (D, Lanus)
5 Javier MASCHERANO (M, River Plate)
6 Leandro FERNANDEZ (D, Newell's Old Boys)
7 Pablo ZABALETA (M, San Lorenzo)
8 Hugo COLACE (M, Argentinos Juniors)
9 Fernando CAVENAGHI (F, River Plate)
10 Carlos TEVEZ (F, Boca Juniors)
11 Marcelo CARRUSCA (M, Estudiantes)
12 Mariano BARBOSA (G, Banfield)
13 Joel BARBOSA (D, Boca Juniors)
14 Jonathan BOTTINELLI (D, San Lorenzo)
15 Walter GARCIA (D, San Lorenzo)
16 Lucas BIGLIA (M, Argentinos Juniors)
17 Jose SOSA (M, Estudiantes)
18 Walter MONTILLO (M, San Lorenzo)
19 German HERRERA (F, Rosario Central)
20 Franco CANGELE (F, Boca Juniors)

AUSTRALIA

1 Nathan COE (G, Internazionale, Ita)
2 Wayne HEATH (D, Brisbane Strikers)
3 Steve PANTELIDIS (D, Melbourne Knights)
4 Alex WILKINSON (D, Northern Spirit)
5 David TARKA (D, Nottingham Forest, Eng)
6 Carl VALERI (M, Internazionale, Ita)
7 Spase DILEVSKI (F, Rot-Weiss Essen, Ger)
8 Mile JEDINAK (M, Varteks, Cro)
9 Scott McDONALD (F, Wimbledon, Eng)
10 Alex BROSQUE (M, Marconi)
11 Matt McKAY (M, Brisbane Strikers)
12 Anthony DANZE (F, Perth Glory)
13 Jonathan RICHTER (M, Northern Spirit)
14 Massimo MURDOCCA (M, South Melbourne)
15 Vince LIA (M, South Melbourne)
16 Dustin WELLS (M, Wollongong Wolves)
17 Michael BAIRD (F, Sydney Olympic)
18 Tom WILLIS (G, Newcastle United)
19 Michael THWAITE (D, Marconi)
20 Jobe WHEELHOUSE (F, Newcastle United)

BRAZIL

1 FERNANDO HENRIQUE (G, Fluminense)
2 DANIEL (D, Sevilla, Spa)
3 ALCIDES EDUARDO (D, Schalke, Ger)
4 ADAILTON (D, Vitoria)
5 CARLOS ALBERTO (M, Figueirense)
6 COELHO (D, Corinthians)
7 DANIEL CARVALHO (F, Internacional)
8 DUDU (M, Vitoria)
9 ANDREZINHO (F, Flamengo)
10 NILMAR (F, Internacional)
11 DAGOBERTO (F, Atletico Paranaense)
12 JEFFERSON (G, Botafogo)
13 KLEBER (F, Sao Paulo)
14 ADRIANO (D, Coritiba)
15 JUNINHO (M, Atletico Mineiro)
16 JARDEL (M, Cruzeiro)
17 GABRIEL (D, Ponte Preta)
18 RENATO (D, Goias)
19 FERNANDINHO (M, Atletico Paranaense)
20 ANDREY (G, Gremio)

BURKINA FASO

1 Daouda DIAKITE (G, Etoile Filante)
2 Saybou DIALLO (M, RC Bobo-Dioulasso)
3 Daouda KINDA (D, RC Kadiogo)
4 Saidou PANANDETIGUIRI (M, Bordeaux, Fra)
5 Salif NOGO (D, US Ouagadougou)
6 Jeannot BOUYAIN (D, RC Kadiogo)
7 Amadou COULIBALY (D, RC Bobo-Dioulasso)
8 Bourema MAIGA (M, Lokeren, Blg)
9 Aristide BANCE (F, Lokeren, Blg)
10 Abdoul Aziz NIKIEMA (M, Bordeaux, Fra)
11 Djibril COMPAORE (F, ASFA Yennenga)
12 Soumaila TASSEMBEDO (D, Etoile Filante)
13 Boureima OUATTARA (D, ASF Bobo-Dioulasso)
14 Roland SANOU (M, RC Bobo-Dioulasso)
15 Ousseni ZONGO (M, Anderlecht, Blg)
16 Dieudonne YARGA (G, ASFA Yennenga)
17 Hamado OUEDRAGO (F, Lokeren, Blg)
18 Amara OUATTARA (M, ASEC Abidjan, IvC)
19 Ibrahim KABORE (F, Etoile Filante)
20 Seydou BARRO (F, Etoile Filante)

CANADA

1 Alim KARIM (G, Syracuse University, USA)
2 Winston MARSHALL (D, Wright State Univ, USA)
3 Nikolas LEDGERWOOD (M, 1860 Munich, Ger)
4 Kevin HARMSE (D, Tromso, Nor)
5 Waldemar DUTRA (M, Osijek, Cro)
6 Andres ARANGO (D, Montreal Impact)
7 Jason DI TULLIO (M, Montreal Impact)
8 Gordon CHIN (M, Vancouver Whitecaps)
9 Iain HUME (F, Tranmere Rovers, Eng)
10 Wyn BELOTTE (F, Wisla Krakow, Pol)
11 Chris LEMIRE (F, Montreal Impact)
12 Francesco BRUNO (M, Syracuse University, USA)
13 Atiba HUTCHINSON (M, Osters, Swe)
14 David EDGAR (D, Newcastle, Eng)
15 Josh SIMPSON (M, Portland University, USA)
16 Elliott GODFREY (F, Watford, Eng)
17 Sita-Taty MATONDO (M, Montreal Impact)
18 Richard ASANTE (D, Syracuse University, USA)
19 Tom LINDLEY (G, Sheffield United, Eng)
20 Josh WAGENAAR (G, Hartwick College)

COLOMBIA

1 Miguel SOLIS (G, Cortulua)
2 Jose DE LA CUESTA (D, Atletico Nacional)
3 Javier ARIZALA (D, Atletico Nacional)
4 Pablo PACHON (D, Independiente Santa Fe)
5 Fredy GUARIN (M, Envigado)
6 Andres GONZALEZ (D, America Cali)
7 Edixon PEREA (F, Atletico Nacional)
8 Harrison OTALVARO (M, America Cali)
9 Jaime RUIZ (F, Cortulua)
10 Macnelly TORRES (M, Atletico Junior)
11 Victor MONTANO (M, Millonarios)
12 Hector LANDAZURI (G, Envigado)
13 Cesar FAWCETT (D, Atletico Junior)
14 Abel AGUILAR (M, Deportivo Cali)
15 Oscar BRICENO (F, Tolima)
16 Yulian ANCHICO (M, Tolima)
17 Jaime CASTRILLON (M, Independiente Medellin)
18 Javier ARAUJO (M, Once Caldas)
19 Erwin CARRILLO (F, Magdalena)
20 Avimiled RIVAS (M, Atletico Nacional)

CZECH REPUBLIC

1 Michal DANEK (G, Banik Ostrava)
2 Vaclav PROCHAZKA (D, Viktoria Plzen)
3 Petr KNAKAL (D, Viktoria Plzen)
4 Roman HUBNIK (D, Sigma Olomouc)
5 Radek DOSOUDIL (D, Sparta Prague)
6 Tomas SIVOK (M, Ceske Budejovice)
7 Milan ZACHARIAS (D, Slavia Prague)
8 Martin LATKA (M, Slavia Prague)
9 Roman BEDNAR (F, Mlada Boleslav)
10 Emil RILKE (F, Slezsky Opava)
11 David LIMBERSKY (M, Viktoria Plzen)
12 Petr SIMA (D, Viktoria Plzen)
13 Pavel FORT (F, Slavia Prague)
14 Jan BROSCHINSKY (M, Slovan Liberec)
15 Jiri BILEK (M, Chmel Blsany)
16 Tomas GRIGAR (G, Vitkovice)
17 Ladislav VOLESAK (M, Sparta Prague)
18 Milan PETRZELA (M, Synot)
19 Ales BESTA (M, Zilina, Slk)
20 Michal HUBNIK (F, Sigma Olomouc)

EGYPT

1 Sherif EKRAMY (G, Al Ahly)
2 Amir AZMY (D, Zamalek)
3 Osama RAGAB (D, Aswan)
4 Hosni ABD RABO (M, Ismaili)
5 Mohamed EL-ZAYAT (D, Al Ahly)
6 Morsy ABDEL LATIF (D, Haras El Hedod)
7 Ali SAKR (M, Al Ahly)
8 Ahmed SAID (D, Ismaili)
9 Rida METWALY (F, El Mahlah)
10 Ahmed WAHID (F, Enbe)
11 Ahmed ASSEM (D, Haras El Hedod)
12 Mohamed ABDEL WAHAB (M, Enbe)
13 Ahmed SAMIR (M, Al Ahly)
14 Ahmed FATHI (M, Ismaili)
15 Hany SAID AHMED (M, Haras El Hedod)
16 Ali FARAG (G, Haras El Hedod)
17 Emad MOTAB (F, Al Ahly)
18 Islam SHOKRY (F, Arab Contractors)
19 Karim ZEKRY (D, Al Masry)
20 Mohamed KHAFAGY (M, Zamalek)

WORLD YOUTH CUP – SQUADS

ENGLAND
1 Andy LONERGAN (G, Preston)
2 Ben BOWDITCH (M, Tottenham)
3 Chris CARRUTHERS (M, Northampton)
4 David FOX (M, Manchester United)
5 Steven TAYLOR (D, Newcastle)
6 Matt KILGALLON (D, Leeds)
7 Jerome THOMAS (F, Arsenal)
8 Gary O'NEIL (M, Portsmouth)
9 Michael CHOPRA (F, Newcastle)
10 Darren CARTER (M, Birmingham)
12 Andrew TAYLOR (D, Middlesbrough)
13 Ross TURNBULL (G, Middlesbrough)
14 Philip IFIL (D, Tottenham)
15 Martin CRANIE (D, Southampton)
16 James McEVELEY (D, Blackburn)
17 Lee CROFT (F, Manchester City)
18 John WELSH (M, Liverpool)
19 Eddie JOHNSON (F, Manchester United)
20 Tommy WRIGHT (F, Leicester)

GERMANY
1 Alexander WALKE (G, Werder Bremen)
2 Christian LELL (D, Bayern Munich)
3 Alexander MEYER (D, Bayer Leverkusen)
4 Robert HUTH (D, Chelsea, Eng)
5 Benjamin WINGERTER (D, Schalke)
6 Michael RUNDIO (D, Stuttgart)
7 Piotr TROCHOWSKI (M, Bayern Munich)
8 Christian SCHULZ (M, Werder Bremen)
9 Sebastian KNEISSL (F, Chelsea, Eng)
10 Ioannis MASMANIDIS (M, Bayer Leverkusen)
11 Denni PATSCHINSKY (F, Viborg, Den)
12 Markus GRUENBERGER (G, Bayern Munich)
13 Christian PANDER (D, Schalke)
14 Malik FATHI (D, Hertha Berlin)
15 Sofian CHAHED (D, Hertha Berlin)
16 Matthias LEHMANN (M, 1860 Munich)
17 Dennis BUEHRER (M, Freiburg)
18 Patrick MILCHRAUM (M, Stuttgarter Kickers)
19 Erdal KILICASLAN (F, Bayern Munich)
20 Alexander LUDWIG (F, Hertha Berlin)

IVORY COAST
1 Daniel YEBOAH (G, Bastia, Fra)
2 Dan OUEHI (D, Stade Abidjan)
3 Dacosta GOORE (D, ASEC Abidjan)
4 Ayi AHYEE (D, Stella Club)
5 Gballou KOUYO (D, Lecce, Ita)
6 Mondakan MAHAN (D, ASEC Abidjan)
7 Jean-Jacques GOSSO (M, Wydad Casablanca, Mor)
8 Arouna KONE (F, Roda JC, Hol)
9 Antonin KOUTOUAN (F, Lorient, Fra)
10 Raphael YABRE (M, Stade Abidjan)
11 Adolph TOHOUA (M, Lierse, Blg)
12 Jean KIPRE (D, Paris Saint-Germain, Fra)
13 Almamy DOUMBIA (M, Sambenedettese, Ita)
14 Andre SAKI (M, Stade Abidjan)
15 Mohamed CISSE (M, Stade Beaucaire, Fra)
16 Souleman BAMBA (D, Paris Saint-Germain, Fra)
17 Herve GUY (F, Bastia, Fra)
18 Francois ZOKO (F, Nancy, Fra)
19 Kassiaty LABI (M, Africa Sports)
20 Drissa TOURÉ (G, ASEC Abidjan)

JAPAN
1 Eiji KAWASHIMA (G, Omiya Ardija)
2 Yuhei TOKUNAGA (M, Waseda University)
3 Makoto KAKUDA (D, Kyoto Purple Sanga)
4 Naoya KIKUCHI (M, Jubilo Iwata)
5 Mitsuru NAGATA (D, Kashiwa Reysol)
6 Yasuyuki KONNO (M, Consadole Sapporo)
7 Sho NARUOKA (M, Jubilo Iwata)
8 Daigo KOBAYASHI (M, Tokyo Verdy 1969)
9 Hiroto MOGI (F, Sanfrecce Hiroshima)
10 Daisuke SAKATA (F, Yokohama F Marinos)
11 Yutaro ABE (F, Yokohama F Marinos)
12 Masahiro OKAMOTO (G, JEF United Ichihara)
13 Naoya KONDO (D, Kashiwa Reysol)
14 Satoru YAMAGISHI (M, JEF United Ichihara)
15 Norio SUZUKI (M, FC Tokyo)
16 Yuzo KURIHARA (D, Yokohama F Marinos)
17 Yuji UNOZAWA (F, Kashiwa Reysol)
18 Tatsuya YAZAWA (M, Kashiwa Reysol)
19 Sota HIRAYAMA (F, Kunimi High School)
20 Kei YAMAGUCHI (M, Nagoya Grampus Eight)

MALI
1 Soumaila DIAKITE (G, Stade Malien)
2 Moussa BAGAYOKO (M, Djoliba)
3 Daouda BAGAYOKO (D, Stade Malien)
4 Boucader DIALLO (D, Stade Malien)
5 Boubacar KONE (D, ASB)
6 Alhassane TOURE (D, Schaffhausen, Swi)
7 Mamadi BERTHE (M, Sedan, Fra)
8 Mamoutou COULIBALY (M, Auxerre, Fra)
9 Youssouf DIALLO (F, Creteil, Fra)
10 Alain Claude TRAORE (F, Stade Malien)
11 Souleymane DEMBELE (D, Stade Malien)
12 Drissa DIAKITE (M, Djoliba)
13 Bako COULIBALY (F, Djoliba)
14 Sekou COULIBALY (D, Lorient, Fra)
15 Mamadou DIAKITE (M, Metz, Fra)
16 Sire Hadrien TOURE (F, Lyon, Fra)
17 Drissa DIARRA (M, Lecce, Ita)
18 Kalifa CISSE (M, Toulouse, Fra)
19 Mahamet DIAGOURAGA (D, Chievo, Ita)
20 Mamadou COULIBALY (G, Real Bamako)

MEXICO
1 Jose MARTINEZ (G, Tecos UAG)
2 Fernando LOPEZ (D, Irapuato)
3 Juan Carlos DE LA BARRERA (D, Irapuato)
4 Joel HUIQUI (D, Pachuca)
5 Ricardo JIMENEZ (D, Yucatan)
6 Fausto PINTO (D, Pachuca)
7 Adrian CORTES (D, Cruz Azul)
8 Juan Carlos MEDINA (M, Atlas)
9 Aldo DE NIGRIS (F, Tigres)
10 Francisco TORRES (M, America)
11 Raul Alvin MENDOZA (M, America)
12 Jesus Yair URBINA (G, Tigres)
13 Jesus PALACIOS (M, Tigres)
14 Oscar ZEA (M, Necaxa)
15 Diego CERVANTES (D, America)
16 Mario ORTIZ (M, Cruz Azul)
17 David COSTILLA (F, Santos Laguna)
18 Juan DE LA CRUZ (M, Atlas)
19 Isaac ROMO (F, Guadalajara)
20 Ignacio TORRES (M, America)

PANAMA
1 Carlos VALDES (G, Chiriqui)
2 Miguel OLIVARES (D, Deportivo Arabe Unido)
3 Armando GUN (D, Chepo)
4 Juan Ramon SOLIS (M, San Francisco)
5 Joel SOLANILLA (D, Patriotas)
6 Gabriel GOMEZ (M, Envigado, Col)
7 Jair CARRASQUILLA (F, Tauro)
8 Cristian VEGA (F, Tauro)
9 Orlando RODRIGUEZ (F, Deportivo Arabe Unido)
10 James BROWN (M, Atletico Veraguense)
11 Rodrigo TELLO (M, Deportivo Arabe Unido)
12 Jose CALDERON (G, Chepo)
13 Cesar AGUILAR (F, Sporting Cocle)
14 Irving BAILEY (D, Alianza)
15 Rene COHN (F, Plaza Amador)
16 Jean McLEAN (M, Chiriqui)
17 Kairo MARTINEZ (M, Deportivo Arabe Unido)
18 Angel LOMBARDO (M, Plaza Amador)
19 Edgar TEM (D, Alianza)
20 Hanamell HILL (M, Bocas Express)

PARAGUAY
1 Anthony SILVA (G, Libertad)
2 Gilberto VELAZQUEZ (D, Guarani)
3 Victor MARCELO (D, Brescia, Ita)
4 Enrique MEZA (D, Sol de America)
5 Angel MARTINEZ (D, Olimpia)
6 Blas LOPEZ (M, Libertad)
7 Erwin AVALOS (F, Cerro Porteno)
8 Edgar BARRETO (M, Cerro Porteno)
9 Dante LOPEZ (F, Maccabi Haifa, Isr)
10 Julio DOS SANTOS (M, Cerro Porteno)
11 Ernesto CRISTALDO (D, Cerro Porteno)
12 Marco ALMEDA (G, Cerro Porteno)
13 Edgar BENITEZ (M, Cerro Porteno)
14 Oscar DIAZ (D, 12 de Octubre)
15 Cristian ANDERSEN (M, Sportivo Luqueno)
16 Andres PEREZ MATTO (M, Olimpia)
17 Jesus MARTINEZ (F, Trinidense)
18 Nelson ROMERO (F, San Lorenzo)
19 Jorge CACERES (F, Sportivo Colombia)
20 Nelson HAEDO VALDEZ (F, Werder Bremen, Ger)

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND
1 Wayne HENDERSON (G, Aston Villa, Eng)
2 Sean DILLON (D, Longford Town)
3 Stephen PAISLEY (D, Longford Town)
4 John FITZGERALD (D, Blackburn, Eng)
5 Stephen KELLY (D, Tottenham, Eng)
6 Graham WARD (M, Kidderminster, Eng)
7 Willo FLOOD (M, Manchester City, Eng)
8 Keith FAHEY (M, St Patrick's Athletic)
9 Stephen ELLIOTT (F, Manchester City, Eng)
10 Michael FOLEY (M, Liverpool, Eng)
11 Jonathan DALY (F, Stockport, Eng)
12 Glenn WHELAN (M, Manchester City, Eng)
13 Paddy McCARTHY (D, Manchester City, Eng)
14 Darren POTTER (M, Liverpool)
15 Stephen CAPPER (D, Scarborough, Eng)
16 Brian MURPHY (G, Swansea, Wal)
17 Kevin DOYLE (F, Cork City)
18 Liam KEARNEY (M, Cork City)
19 Eamon ZAYED (F, Bray Wanderers)
20 David BELL (M, Rushden & Diamonds, Eng)

SAUDI ARABIA
1 Hamad AL-SUWILM (G, Al Ittifaq)
2 Mesfr AL-KAHTANI (D, Al Ittihad)
3 Suliman AMBDU (D, Al Wahda)
4 Mazen AL-FARAJ (M, Al Hilal)
5 Abdullatif AL-GHANNAM (M, Al Shabab)
6 Abdullah AL-DOSARI (M, Al Shabab)
7 Aboulaziz BIN SARAN (M, Al Shabab)
8 Ahmed AL-SUWAILH (F, Al Hilal)
9 Naji MAJRASGHI (F, Al Shabab)
10 Eisa AL-MAHYANI (F, Al Wahda)
11 Ahmed ATEEF (M, Al Shabab)
12 Khalid AL-SALAMAH (D, Al Nassr)
13 Saad AL-ABOUAD (D, Al Ittifaq)
14 Tariq AL-HARGAN (G, Al Shabab)
15 Abdoh AUTEF (M, Al Shabab)
16 Mohammed AL-MOWALLAD (M, Al Ahli)
17 Salman AL-KHALIDI (D, Al Qadisiyah)
18 Abdoh HAKAMI (M, Al Qadisiyah)
19 Qsamah AL-HARBI (D, Al Ittihad)
20 Assaf AL-QARNI (G, Al Wahda)

SLOVAKIA
1 Peter KOSTOLANI (G, Druzstevnik Bac)
2 Marek KOSTOLANI (D, Nitra)
3 Igor HRABAC (D, Trencin)
4 Marek CECH (D, Inter Bratislava)
5 Roman KONECNY (D, Spartak Trnava)
6 Marian KURTY (M, Ruzomberok)
7 Milan IVANA (F, Trèncin)
8 Tomas BRUSKO (M, Slovan Bratislava)
9 Filip SEBO (F, Inter Bratislava)
10 Juraj HALENAR (F, Inter Bratislava)
11 Filip HOLOSKO (F, Slovan Liberec, Cze)
12 Dusan PERNIS (G, Dubnica)
13 Stefan ZOSAK (M, Ruzomberok)
14 Kamil KOPUNEK (M, Spartak Trnava)
15 Dusan MIKLAS (M, Trencin)
16 Milos BREZINSKY (D, Slovan Liberec, Cze)
17 Lubomir GAJDOS (M, Kosice)
18 Igor ZOFCAK (M, Ruzomberok)
19 Viktor PECOVSKY (M, Dukla Banska Bystrica)
20 Martin SKRTEL (D, Trencin)

SOUTH KOREA
1 KIM Young-kwang (G, Chunnam Dragons)
2 OH Beom-seok (D, Pohang Steelers)
3 KIM Chi-woo (D, Chungang University)
4 KIM Chi-gon (D, Anyang Cheetahs)
5 PARK Ju-sung (D, Suwon Bluewings)
6 KIM Jin-kyu (D, Chunnam Dragons)
7 LEE Jong-min (M, Suwon Bluewings)
8 LEE Ho (M, Ulsan Hyundai)
9 JUNG Jo-gook (F, Anyang Cheetahs)
10 CHOI Sung-kuk (F, Ulsan Hyundai)
11 CHO Won-hee (M, Gwangju Sangmu)
12 SUNG Kyung-il (G, Konkuk University)
13 NAMKUNG Woong (M, Suwon Bluewings)
14 KWON Jip (M, Suwon Bluewings)
15 PARK Chu-young (M, Chunggu HS)
16 HAN Jae-woong (M, Busan I.cons)
17 LIM You-hwan (D, Kyoto Purple Sanga, Jap)
18 KIM Dong-hun (F, Oita Trinita, Jap)
19 YEO Hyo-jin (D, Korea University)
20 LEE Ho-jin (M, Sungkyunkwan University)

SPAIN
1 MOYA (G, Mallorca)
2 ALEXIS (D, Mallaga)
3 PENA (D, Barcelona)
4 CARLOS GARCIA (D, Espanyol)
5 MELLI (D, Betis)
6 VITOLO (M, Tenerife)
7 COROMINAS (M, Espanyol)
8 INIESTA (M, Barcelona)
9 SERGIO GARCIA (F, Barcelona)
10 MANU (F, Atletico Madrid)
11 GAVILAN (M, Valencia)
12 BOUZON (D, Celta Vigo)
13 RIESGO (G, Eibar)
14 ARIZMENDI (F, Atletico Madrid)
15 GOIKOETXEA (D, Athletic Bilbao)
16 GABI (M, Atletico Madrid)
17 JUANFRAN (M, Real Madrid)
18 PINA (M, Zaragoza)
19 TELLO (M, Real Madrid)
20 RUBEN (G, Barcelona)

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
1 Salem ABDULLA (G, Al Shabab)
2 Abdulla AHMAD (D, Dubai)
3 Yousif JABER (M, Bani Yas)
4 Ahmed ABDULLA (M, Al Wahda)
5 Ali AL-ZAABI (D, Al Wahda)
6 Deyab ABDULLA (D, Al Wahda)
7 Ali AL-WEHAIBI (M, Al Ain)
8 Saad MUBARAK (D, Bani Yas)
9 Redha ABDULHADI (M, Al Jazeira)
10 Ismail MATAR (F, Al Wahda)
11 Saleh HAMAD (F, Al Wahda)
12 Salem ZAYED (D, Al Wahda)
13 Darwush AHMAD (F, Al Nasr)
14 Majid ABDULLA (M, Al Etehad)
15 Shehab AHMED (F, Al Ain)
16 Juma ALI (M, Al Khaleej)
17 Ismail RABEE (G, Al Shabab)
18 Abdulla MALALLAH (D, El Emarat)
19 Mohamed MALALLAH (F, Al Khaleej)
20 Ali SULTAN (F, Al Ain)

UNITED STATES
1 Steve CRONIN (G, Santa Clara University)
2 Zak WHITBREAD (D, Liverpool, Eng)
3 Justin MAPP (M, Chicago Fire)
4 Chad MARSHALL (D, Stanford University)
5 Ryan COCHRANE (D, Santa Clara University)
6 Jordan STONE (M, Dallas Burn)
7 Ed JOHNSON (F, Dallas Burn)
8 C J KLAAS (D, Washington University)
9 Santino QUARANTA (F, DC United)
10 Bobby CONVEY (M, DC United)
11 Ricardo CLARK (M, MetroStars)
12 Freddy ADU (M, Bethesda International)
13 Mike MAGEE (F, MetroStars)
14 Clint DEMPSEY (M, Furman University)
15 David JOHNSON (M, Willem II, Hol)
16 Drew MOOR (D, Indiana University)
17 Knox CAMERON (F, Michigan University)
18 Ford WILLIAMS (G, North Carolina University)
19 Ned GRABAVOY (M, Indiana University)
20 Jordan HARVEY (D, UCLA)

UZBEKISTAN
1 Temur GANIEV (G, Metallurg Bekabad)
2 Shavkat RAIMKULOB (D, Traktor Tashkent)
3 Roostam KADIROV (D, Mashal Mubarek)
4 Yaroslav KRUSHELNITSKIY (D, Pakhtakor)
5 Muzaffar HOLIKOV (D, Kyzylkum Zarafshan)
6 Jasur HASANOV (M, Navbakhor Namangan)
7 Mansurjon SAIDOV (M, Neftchi Fergana)
8 Nodirbek QUZIBOYEV (M, Neftchi Fergana)
9 Alexander GEINRIH (F, CSKA Moscow, Rus)
10 Ilyas ZEYTULAYEV (M, Juventus, Ita)
11 Ildar MAGDEEV (M, Pakhtakor)
12 Ignatiy NESTEROV (G, Pakhtakor)
13 Komoliddin TADJIYEV (D, Pakhtakor)
14 Marat BIKMOEV (F, Pakhtakor)
15 Konstantin BOYEV (F, Mashal Mubarek)
16 Bakhriddin VAHOBOV (F, Pakhtakor)
17 Vladimir ANIKIN (D, FK Riga, Lat)
18 Islom INNOMOV (D, FK Bukhara)
19 Timur SULTANOV (D, Navbakhor Namangan)
20 Ilhomjon SUYUNOV (D, Mashal Mubarek)

INTERNATIONALS

Thursday, December 11

Dec 11 - Valletta - friendly
Malta 0
Poland 4 (Bieniuk 54, Mila 57, Sikora 83, Burkhardt 88)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 300. **Ref:** Kasnaferis (Gre)
Malta: Muscat - Theuma (Azzopardi 84), Chetcuti, Carabott, Mamo, Briffa, Agius, Sciberras (Mallia 76), Woods, Bogdanovic (Zahra 66), Turner (Mattocks 60).
Poland: Szamotulski (Kuszczak 46) - Adamski, Bieniuk, Baszczynski (Wasilewski 46), Glowacki, Rachwal (Radzewicz 74), Piechniak (Madej 68), Surma, Rasiak (Jelen 46), Mila (Burkhardt 64), Niedzielan (Sikora 81).

Saturday, December 13

Dec 13 - Selibe Pikwe - friendly
Botswana 0
Zimbabwe 2 (Chandida 30, Sandaka 80)
HT: 0-1

Sunday, December 14

Dec 14 - Valletta - friendly
Poland 3 (Rasiak 8, Mila 11, Jelen 50)
Lithuania 1 (Butrimavicius 5)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 100. **Ref:** Attard (Mlt)
Poland: Szamotulski (Kuszczak 46) - Wasilewski, Glowacki, Kowalczyk (Stasiak 62), Adamski (Baszczynski 46), Piechniak (Surma 76), Mila (Burkhardt 62), Rachwal (Bieniuk 46), Radzewicz (Madej 76), Rasiak (Niedzielan 46), Sikora (Jelen 46).
Lithuania: V Zutautas - Sanajevas, Mikuckis (Majus 32), Alunderis, Gedgaudas (Savenas 73), Zvirgzdauskas, E Cesnauskis, Butrimavicius (Kucys 64), Danilevicius, Tamosauskas (Velicka 59), Grigalevicius (Barevicius 46).

Dec 14 - Dubai - friendly
United Arab Emirates 3 (Mubarak 5, Srour 56, Omar pen 75)
Azerbaijan 3 (Nazayef 35, 90, Kerimov 85)
HT: 1-1
Sent off: Akhmedov (Azerbaijan)

Tuesday, December 16

Dec 16 - Paphos, Cyprus - friendly
Lebanon 0
Kuwait 2 (Al-Shamali 24, Abdulkudous 26)
HT: 0-2
Lebanon: Samad - Mohammed, Sweidan, Kinaan, Hamiye, De Silva, Fernandez, Abbas Ali Atwi (Ahmed), Abbas Ahmed Atwi, Attar (Shoum), Shahoud (Naserdeen).
Kuwait: Kankouni - Abdulreda, Youha, Al-Shamali, Nada, Bakhit (Fahad), Ali (Atiqi), Mutawa (Salama), Abdulkudous, B Abdullah, Nahar.

Wednesday, December 17

Dec 17 - Muscat - friendly
Oman 1 (Saleh 84)
Azerbaijan 0
HT: 0-0

Dec 17 - Dammam - friendly
Saudi Arabia 1 (Tukar 28)
Estonia 1 (Zahhovaiko 40)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 1,500. **Ref:** Al-Mehannah (Sau)
Saudi Arabia: Zaid - Ahmed D Al-Dosari (Khariri 46), Tukar, Al-Monthasari, Al-Ghamdi (Al-Meshal 46), Haousaoui (Al-Harbi 46), Al-Khattani (Aboshger 46), Al-Shlhoob, K Al-Dosari, Al-Janoubi, Al-Basha (Al-Shahrani 66).
Estonia: Kaalma - Allas, Rahn, Piiroja, Saviauk, Reinumae, Haavistu (Viikmae 59), Reim, M Rooba (Kristal 90), Terehhov (Lindpere 59), Zahhovaiko (Zelinski 72).

Thursday, December 18

Dec 18 - Paphos, Cyprus - friendly
Lebanon 0
Kuwait 0

Saturday, December 20

Dec 20 - Cyprus - friendly
Latvia 0
Kuwait 2 (Ali 6, B Abdullah 69)
HT: 0-1

Dec 20 - Muscat - friendly
Oman 3 (Saleh 6, 72, Al-Dhabat 80)
Estonia 1 (Zelinski 45)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 1,000. **Ref:** Al-Harrassi (Oma)
Oman: Al-Habsi (Al-Mazroui 46) - Al-Naufali (Ashour 85), Ashoun (Mustahail 46), Rabih, Hassan Yousuf, Al-Mukhaini, Bashir, Hubais (Khalid 70), Hadid (B Mubarak 46), Saleh (Al-Busafy 77), Al-Dhabat. *Sent off: Bashir 88min.*
Estonia: Kaalma - Allas, Stepanov, Jaager, Saviauk, Reim, Viikmae (Piiroja 85), Kristal (Reinumae 81), Lindpere (Terehhov 81), Zelinski (M Rooba 66), Zahhovaiko (Haavistu 60).

Dec 20 - Riyadh - friendly
Saudi Arabia 1 (Al-Meshal 86)
Azerbaijan 0
HT: 0-0

Sunday, December 21

Dec 21 - Doha - friendly
Qatar 0
Iraq 0

Dec 21 - friendly
United Arab Emirates 2 (Omar pen 41, 45)
Kenya 2 (Omolisi 86, Juma 90)
HT: 2-0

Friday, December 26

Dec 26 - Hamilton - friendly
Bermuda 1 (Nusum 79)
Barbados 2 (Lovell 39, 43)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Mouchette (Ber)
Bermuda: Adams - Dill, Lewis, Hunt (Thomas 46), Jennings, Warren (Manders 67), Wade, Ming (Peniston 46), Bean Jr (Coddington 61), Steede (Nusum 46), Smith.
Barbados: Howell - Sobers, Parris, Cox, R Burrowes, Grosvenor, K Hall, Lovell (W Burrowes 72), N Forde (S Hall 80), Riley (Holmes 80), Goodridge.

Saturday, December 27

Dec 27 - Miami, USA - friendly
Haiti 6
Bahamas 0

ASIAN CUP 2004 QUALIFIERS

Group D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iran	6	5	0	1	16	5	15
Jordan	6	5	0	1	13	6	15
Lebanon	6	1	1	4	2	8	4
North Korea	6	0	1	5	2	14	1

04.09.03 .....North Korea-Lebanon 0-1
05.09.03 .....Iran-Jordan 4-1
26.09.03 .....Jordan-Iran 3-2
17.10.03 .....Jordan-Lebanon 1-0
27.10.03 .....North Korea-Iran 1-3
03.11.03 .....Lebanon-North Korea 1-1
12.11.03 .....Iran-North Korea.....(awarded) 3-0*
12.11.03 .....Lebanon-Jordan 0-2
18.11.03 .....Jordan-North Korea 3-0
19.11.03 .....Lebanon-Iran 0-3
28.11.03 .....Iran-Lebanon 1-0
.....North Korea-Jordan ... (awarded) 0-3**
**Iran were leading 1-0 when game was abandoned in 60th minute after North Korea's players walked off pitch in protest, claiming one of their players had been hit by an object thrown from crowd*
***Jordan's players were refused entry to North Korea after customs officials said they did not have visas*

Group G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Turkmenistan	6	4	2	0	10	2	14
UAE	6	4	1	1	13	5	13
Syria	6	2	1	3	16	10	7
Sri Lanka	6	0	0	6	1	23	0

15.10.03 .....Syria-Sri Lanka 5-0
18.10.03 .....Syria-Sri Lanka 8-0
19.10.03 .....Turkmenistan-UAE 1-0
30.10.03 .....UAE-Turkmenistan 1-1
07.11.03 .....Syria-UAE 1-3
09.11.03 .....Turkmenistan-Sri Lanka.....1-0
12.11.03 .....Turkmenistan-Sri Lanka.....3-0
14.11.03 .....UAE-Syria 3-1
18.11.03 .....UAE-Sri Lanka 3-1
22.11.03 .....UAE-Sri Lanka 3-0
28.11.03 .....Syria-Turkmenistan 1-1
.....Turkmenistan-Syria ..... (awarded) 3-0*
**Syria did not arrive for game*

Group winners and runners-up qualify for finals

CECAFA CUP

(East and Central African Championship)

In Sudan

Group A

Nov 30 - Khartoum
Zanzibar 0
Sudan 4 (H El-Rasheed 10, 45, Aldoud 50, Mohammed pen 90)
HT: 0-2

Dec 2 - Khartoum
Rwanda 2 (Kerekezi pen 40, 56)
Zanzibar 2 (Juma pen 55, 65)
HT: 1-0

Dec 4 - Khartoum
Sudan 3 (H El-Rasheed 11, Jebril 60, Onsa 87)
Rwanda 0
HT: 1-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sudan	2	2	0	0	7	0	6
Rwanda	2	0	1	1	2	5	1
Zanzibar	2	0	1	1	2	6	1

Group B

Nov 30 - Kassala
Uganda 2 (Kabagambe 43, Kabeta 60)
Eritrea 1 (Shinash 70)
HT: 1-0

Dec 2 - Kassala
Kenya 3 (Omondi 27, Mathenge 90, Mulama 90)
Eritrea 2 (Goitom 30, 48)
HT: 1-1

Dec 4 - Kassala
Uganda 1 (Obua 47)
Kenya 1 (Sunguti 90)
HT: 0-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kenya	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
Uganda	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
Eritrea	2	0	0	2	3	5	0

Top two from each group qualified for semi-finals

Semi-finals

Dec 8 - Khartoum
Sudan 0
Uganda 0
Aet
Uganda 4-3 on pens

Dec 8 - Khartoum
Kenya 1 (Omondi 44)
Rwanda 1 (Lomani 30)
Aet. **HT:** 1-1. **90mins:** 1-1
Rwanda 4-3 on pens

Third-place play-off

Dec 10 - Khartoum
Kenya 2 (Sunguti 24, Omondi 35)
Sudan 1 (Mahmoud pen 30)
HT: 2-1

Final

Dec 10 - Khartoum
Rwanda 0
Uganda 2 (Lubega 51, Obua 58)
HT: 0-0
Uganda: Kalyesubula - Kaaya, Tabula, Mwesigwa, Mubiru, Kasule, Mawejje, Bajope, Lubega (Kitagenda), Obua, Mutenza.

CEMAC CUP

(Central African Economic and Monetary Community Cup)

In Brazzaville, Congo

Group A

Dec 5
Congo 3 (Ayessa 25, Ndey 56, Beaulia 67)
Gabon 2 (Nguema 40, Zue 63)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Tchoumba (Cam)

Dec 9
Gabon 1
Congo 1 (Ayessa 56)
HT: 0-0
Congo 4-3 on agg; but both qualified for semi-finals since Chad withdrew from group

Group B

Dec 7
Cameroon B 2 (M Mokake 55, Abada 70)
Central African Republic 2 (Oroko 10, Sandjo 30)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Mbera (Gab)

Dec 9
Central African Republic 1 (Sandjo 83)
Cameroon B 0
HT: 0-0
Central African Republic 3-2 on agg; but both qualified for semi-finals since Equatorial Guinea withdrew from group

Semi-finals

Dec 11
Congo 0
Cameroon B 2 (Ambassa 45, Abada 90)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Mbera (Gab)

Dec 11
Central African Republic 2
Gabon 0

Third-place play-off

Dec 13
Congo 1
Gabon 0

Final

Dec 13
Central African Republic 2 (Oroko 63, Destin 74)
Cameroon B 3 (Mevengue pen 16, M Mokake 69, E Mokake 78)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Bansimba (Con)

EAST ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

In Japan

Dec 4 - Tokyo
Hong Kong 1 (Akandu 34)
South Korea 3 (Kim Do-heon 23, Kim Do-hoon 50, Ahn Jung-hwan 57)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 14,895. **Ref:** Napitupulu (Ins)
Hong Kong: Fan Chun-yip - Ng Wai-chiu (Man Pei-tak 82), Chan Waiho, Lee Wai-man, Poon Yiu-cheuk, Luk Koon-pong, Szeto Man-chun, Lau Chi-keung, Wong Chun-yue (Law Chun-bong 69), Kwok Yue-hung (Sham Kwok-keung 21), Akandu.
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Kim Tae-young, Choi Jin-cheul, Yoo Sang-chul, Lee Eul-yong (Lee Kwan-woo 80), Kim Dong-jin, Choi Won-kwon, Kim Do-heon, Choi Yong-soo (Kim Dae-eui 46), Ahn Jung-hwan (Chung Kyung-ho 72), Kim Do-hoon.

Dec 4 - Tokyo
Japan 2 (Kubo 4, 80)
China 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 41,742. **Ref:** Nagalingam (Sin)
Japan: Narazaki - N Yamada, Miyamoto, Alex, Nakazawa, Tsuboi, Fukunishi, Ogasawara, Endo, Kubo, Okubo (Motoyama 77).
China: Liu Yunfei - Li Weifeng, Yang Pu, Zheng Zhi, Ji Mingyi (Liu Jindong 19), Xiao Zhanbo, Xu Yunlong (Wei Xin 73), Zhou Haibin (Yang Chen 68), Zhao Junzhe, Li Yi, Hao Haidong.

Dec 7 - Saitama
South Korea 1 (Yoo Sang-chul 45)
China 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 27,715. **Ref:** Abdul Hamid (Mly)
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Kim Tae-young, Choi Jin-cheul, Yoo Sang-chul, Lee Eul-yong, Kim Dong-jin, Choi Won-kwon, Kim Do-heon, Choi Yong-soo (Lee Kwan-woo 64), Ahn Jung-hwan (Kim Do-hoon 74), Kim Dae-eul (Kim Hyun-soo 90). *Sent off: Lee Eul-yong 60min.*
China: Liu Yunfei - Li Weifeng, Yang Pu, Zheng Zhi, Ji Mingyi (Zheng Bin 61), Zhou Ting (Du Ping 70), Liu Jindong, Zhao Xuri (Zhou Haibin 79), Zhao Junzhe, Li Yi, Yang Chen.

Dec 7 - Saitama
Japan 1 (Alex pen 37)
Hong Kong 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 45,145. **Ref:** Piromya (Tha)
Japan: Narazaki - N Yamada (Ishikawa 79), Miyamoto, Alex, Tsuboi, Moniwa, Fukunishi, Ogasawara (Oku 70), Endo (T Yamada 67), Kubo, Okubo.
Hong Kong: Fan Chun-yip - Lai Kai-cheuk, Lee Wai-man, Poon Yiu-cheuk (Leung Chi-wing 90), Luk Koon-Pong, Szeto Man-chun, Lau Chi-keung, Wong Chun-yue, Man Pei-tak, Law Chun-bong (Chan Ho-man 87), Akandu.

Dec 10 - Yokohama
China 3 (Zhao Xuri 20, Liu Jindong 21, Yang Chen 44)
Hong Kong 1 (Lo Chi-kwan 75)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 17,400. **Ref:** Piromya (Tha)
China: Liu Yunfei - Li Weifeng, Yang Pu (Zhou Ting 90), Wei Xin (Ji Mingyi 56), Xiao Zhanbo, Liu Jindong, Zhao Xuri, Zhao Junzhe (Zhou Haibin 70), Zheng Bin, Yang Chen, Zhang Shuo.
Hong Kong: Fan Chun-yip - Lai Kei-cheuk, Lee Wai-man, Poon Yiu-cheuk (Lo Chi-kwan 73), Luk Koon-pong (Leung Chi-wing 75), Szeto Man-chun, Lau Chi-keung, Wong Chun-yue (Tam Wai-kwok 78), Man Pei-tak, Law Chun-bong, Akandu.

Dec 10 - Yokohama
Japan 0
South Korea 0
Att: 62,633. **Ref:** Nagalingam (Sin)
Japan: Narazaki - N Yamada (Kurobe 89), Miyamoto, Alex, Nakazawa (Motoyama 46), Tsuboi, Fukunishi (Fujita 46), Ogasawara, Endo, Kubo, Okubo. *Sent off: Okubo 18min.*
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Park Jae-hong, Choi Jin-cheul, Yoo Sang-chul, Kim Dong-jin, Choi Won-kwon, Hyun Young-min (Lee Kwan-woo 67), Kim Do-heon, Ahn Jung-hwan, Kim Do-hoon (Kim Eun-jung 84), Kim Dae-eul (Chung Kyung-ho 46).

EAST ASIAN CHAMP'SHIP - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Korea	3	2	1	0	4	1	7
Japan	3	2	1	0	3	0	7
China	3	1	0	2	3	4	3
Hong Kong	3	0	0	3	2	7	0

BAHRAIN INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT

Dec 12 - Manama
Bahrain 2 (Isa 12, Hebail 33)
Iraq 2 (Mounajed 40, Taher 76)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 15,000

Dec 12 - Manama
Egypt 1 (T El-Sayed 8)
Kenya 0
HT: 1-0

Dec 15 - Manama
Bahrain 0
Egypt 1 (Shehata 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,000

Dec 15 - Manama
Iraq 2 (Taher 9, Hassoon 43)
Kenya 0
HT: 2-0

Dec 18 - Manama
Bahrain 2 (Jamal 82, Baba 90)
Kenya 1 (Omondi 65)
HT: 0-0
Sent off: Issa (Kenya)

Dec 18 - Manama
Egypt 2 (Belal 21, 50)
Iraq 0
HT: 1-0

BAHRAIN INTL TNMT - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Egypt	3	3	0	0	4	0	9
Iraq	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Bahrain	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Kenya	3	0	0	3	1	5	0

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

December 10

Bayern Munich (Ger) 1 (Makaay pen 42)
Anderlecht (Blg) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 52,000. **Ref:** Milton Nielsen (Den)
Bayern: Kahn - Salihamidzic (Schweinsteiger 79), Kuffour, Linke, Lizarazu, Hargreaves, Ballack, Ze Roberto (Sagnol 67), Santa Cruz, Makaay, Pizarro.
Anderlecht: Zitka - Zewlakow (Wilhelmsson 63), Kompany, Tihinen, Deschacht, Hasi (Iachtchouk 79), Zetterberg, Baseggio, Hendrikx (Kolar 86), Mornar, Dindane.

Lyon (Fra) 3 (Elber 6, Juninho 52, pen 86)
Celtic (Sco) 2 (Hartson 24, Sutton 75)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 40,125. **Ref:** Meier (Swi)
Lyon: Coupet - Reveillere, Cacapa, Edmilson, Berthod (Carriere 76), Govou, Diarra, Luyindula, Juninho (Muller 89), Malouda, Elber (Dhorasoo 87).
Celtic: Hedman - Mjaliby, Varga, Balde, Gray (Wallace 68), Miller, Lennon, Sutton (Kennedy 80), Petrov, Larsson, Hartson (Sylla 68).

GROUP A - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lyon	6	3	1	2	7	7	10
Bayern Munich	6	2	3	1	6	5	9
Celtic	6	2	1	3	8	7	7
Anderlecht	6	2	1	3	4	6	7

Group B

December 10

Arsenal (Eng) 2 (Pires 12, Ljungberg 67)
Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 35,343. **Ref:** Michel (Slk)
Arsenal: Lehmann - Toure, Campbell, Cygan, Cole, Ljungberg, Gilberto Silva, Vieira, Pires, Bergkamp (Kanu 74), Henry.
Lokomotiv: Ovchinnikov - Evseev, Pachinin, Sennikov, Ignashevich, Lekgetho, Khokhlov, Maminov, Loskov, Buznikin (Gurenko 46), Ashvetia (Parks 46). *Sent off: Lekgetho 45min.*

Kyiv Dynamo (Ukr) 1 (Diogo Rincon 85)
Internazionale (Ita) 1 (Adani 68)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 82,500. **Ref:** Veissiere (Fra)
Dynamo: Shovkovskyi - Dmytrulin (Cernat 78), Sablic, Gavrancic, Nesmachnyi, Peev (Milevsky 84), Ghioane (Husiev 74), Leko, Diogo Rincon, Bialkevich, Shatskikh.
Inter: Toldo - Cordoba, Cannavaro, Adani, J Zanetti, Almeyda, Emre (Recoba 88), Pasquale, Van der Meyde (Martins 49), Vieri, Cruz (Lamouchi 82).

GROUP B - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	6	3	1	2	9	6	10
Lokomotiv M	6	2	2	2	7	7	8
Internazionale	6	2	2	2	8	11	8
Kyiv Dynamo	6	2	1	3	8	8	7

Group C

December 10

AEK Athens (Gre) 0
Monaco (Fra) 0
Att: 3,000. **Ref:** Stark (Ger)
AEK: Mihailidis - Borbokis, Kreek, Moras, Kapsis, Zagorakis, Tsartas, Katsouranis, Lakis (Nalitzis 56), Limberopoulos (Maladenis 67), Okkas (Konstantinidis 83).
Monaco: Sylva - Rodriguez, Ibarra (Carole 73), Squillaci, Evra, Givet, Cisse, Bernardi, Plasil, Morientes, Adebayor (Camara 62).

PSV Eindhoven (Hol) 3 (De Jong 14, 90, Robben 48)
Deportivo La Coruna (Spa) 2 (Luque 58, Pandiani 83)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Collina (Ita)
PSV: Waterreus - Bogelund, Ooijer, Bouma, Lee, Park (Rommedahl 46), Vogel, De Jong, Robben, Kezman, Vennegoor of Hesselink.
Deportivo: Molina - Hector, Naybet, Jorge Andrade, Capdevila, Scaloni (Cesar 84), Sergio (Luque 57), Duscher, Fran, Valeron, Diego Tristan (Pandiani 63).

GROUP C - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monaco	6	3	2	1	15	6	11
Dep La Coruna	6	3	1	2	12	12	10
PSV Eindhoven	6	3	1	2	8	7	10
AEK Athens	6	0	2	4	1	11	2

Group D

December 10

Juventus (Ita) 7 (Trezeguet 14, 25, Miccoli 19, Maresca 28, Di Vaio 63, Del Piero 67, Zalayeta 79)
Olympiakos (Gre) 0
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 12,500. **Ref:** Plautz (Aut)
Juventus: Chimenti - Birindelli, Iuliano (Zambrotta 84), Montero, Pessotto, Tudor, Conte, Maresca, Miccoli (Del Piero 66), Zalayeta, Trezeguet (Di Vaio 58).
Olympiakos: Eleftheropoulos - Venetidis, Anatolakis (Georgiadis 68), Mavrogenidis, Kostoulas, Karembeu, Pantos, Kafes (Gonias 61), Djordjevic, Giovanni (Niniadis 77), Castillo.

Real Sociedad (Spa) 1 (De Paula 50)
Galatasaray (Tur) 1 (Hakan Sukur 25)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Hauge (Nor)
Sociedad: Alberto - Lopez Rekarte, Schurrer, Kvarme, Aranzabal, Xabi Alonso, Alkiza (Boris 86), Karpin, Gabilondo, Nihat (Jauregi 88), De Paula (Aranburu 72).
Galatasaray: Mondragon - Tamas, De Boer (Umit 86), Bulent, Hakan Unsal (Cihan 76), Ergun, Hasan Sas (Arif 65), Sabri, Petre, Berkant, Hakan Sukur.

GROUP D - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	6	4	1	1	15	6	13
Real Sociedad	6	2	3	1	8	8	9
Galatasaray	6	2	1	3	6	8	7
Olympiakos	6	1	1	4	6	13	4

Group E

December 9

Manchester United (Eng) 2 (Van Nistelrooy 45, Giggs 58)
Stuttgart (Ger) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 67,141. **Ref:** Poulat (Fra)
Man Utd: Carroll - G Neville, Ferdinand, Silvestre, O'Shea, Fletcher, P Neville, Scholes (Djemba Djemba 79), Fortune, Van Nistelrooy (Forlan 70), Giggs (Bellion 70).
Stuttgart: Hildebrand - Hinkel, Fernando Meira, Wenzel, Lahm, Soldo, Vranjes (Tiffert 46), Heldt, Hleb (Centurion 76), Szabics (Cacau 46), Kuranyi.

Rangers (Sco) 1 (Mols 28)
Panathinaikos (Gre) 3 (Zutautas 32, Basinas 62, Constantinou 80)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 48,588. **Ref:** Fandel (Ger)
Rangers: Klos - Ross (Duffy 83), Berg, Khizanishvili (Vanoli 65), Ball, Burke (Ostenstad 70), Hughes, Ricksen, Lovenkrands, Mols, Capucho.
Panathinaikos: Nikopolidis - Seitaridis, Morris, Munch, Henriksen, Goumas, Sanmartean (Epalle 46), Basinas, Zutautas, Sapanis (Vlaovic 78), Constantinou.

GROUP E - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Manchester Utd	6	5	0	1	13	2	15
Stuttgart	6	4	0	2	9	6	12
Panathinaikos	6	1	1	4	5	13	4
Rangers	6	1	1	4	4	10	4

Group F

December 9

Partizan Belgrade (Ser) 1 (Delibasic 79)
Marseille (Fra) 1 (Hossam 61)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 30,000. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)
Partizan: Pantic - Malbasa, Cirkovic, Ognjanovic, Savic, Ilic (Radoncic 88), Rzasa (Drulovic 66), Ivic, Duljaj, Iliev (Cakar 88), Delibasic.
Marseille: Gavanon - Christanval (Beye 16), Ecker, Meite, Van Buyten, N'Diaye, Hemdani, Johansen, Vachousek, Drogba, Hossam.

Real Madrid (Spa) 1 (Solari 9)
FC Porto (Por) 1 (Derlei pen 34)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** Bennett (Eng)
Real Madrid: Cesar - Michel Salgado, Pavon, Raul Bravo, Roberto Carlos, Borja (Jordi 89), Cambiasso, Figo (Minambres 46), Zidane, Solari, Ronaldo (Portillo 46).
Porto: Vitor Baia - Paulo Ferreira, Ricardo Carvalho, Pedro Emanuel, Ricardo Costa, Alenichev (Bosingwa 81), Costinha, Deco, Pedro Mendes, Jankauskas (Hugo Almeida 74), Derlei (Bruno Moraes 90).

GROUP F - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	6	4	2	0	11	5	14
FC Porto	6	3	2	1	9	8	11
Marseille	6	1	1	4	9	11	4
Partizan Belgrade	6	0	3	3	3	8	3

Group G

December 9

Besiktas (Tur) 0
Chelsea (Eng) 2 (Hasselbaink 77, Bridge 85)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 55,350. **Ref:** Frisk (Swe)
(Played in Gelsenkirchen, Germany)
Besiktas: Cordoba - Emre, Ronaldo, Zago, Kaan Dobra (Okan 69), Tayfur, Pancu, Yasin Sulun (Hassan 80), Ibrahim, Sergen (Tumer 74), Ilhan.
Chelsea: Cudicini - Gallas, Desailly, Terry, Makelele, Johnson, Gronkjaer (Duff 72), Lampard, Geremi, Babayaro (Bridge 83), Hasselbaink.

Sparta Prague (Cze) 1 (Kincl 90)
Lazio (Ita) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 17,825. **Ref:** Cortez Batista (Por)
Sparta: Blazek - Labant, Hubschman, Johana, Kovac, Pergl, Michalik (Kincl 73), Poborsky, Zelenka, I Gluscevic (Jezek 85), Sionko (Jun 89).
Lazio: Peruzzi - Stam, Fernando Couto, Negro, Favalli (Sergio Conceicao 89), Fiore, Albertini, Stankovic, Gottardi (Liverani 53), Muzzi (Inzaghi 73), Corradi.

GROUP G - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	6	4	1	1	9	3	13
Sparta Prague	6	2	2	2	5	5	8
Besiktas	6	2	1	3	5	7	7
Lazio	6	1	2	3	6	10	5

Group H

December 9

Club Brugge (Blg) 2 (Lange 27, Saeternes 83)
Ajax (Hol) 1 (Sonck pen 41)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 28,041. **Ref:** Messina (Ita)
Brugge: Verlinden - De Cock, Simons, Rozehnal (Smolders 78), Van der Heyden, Clement, Verheyen, Englebert, Ceh, Martens (Cornelis 88), Lange (Saeternes 65).
Ajax: Lobont - Grygera (Van Damme 85), Heitinga, Escude, Maxwell, De Jong, Van der Vaart, Sneijder, Sonck, Ibrahimovic (Litmanen 72), Mitea (Soetaers 79).

Milan (Ita) 1 (Kaka 41)
Celta Vigo (Spa) 2 (Jesuli 42, Jose Ignacio 71)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 36,207. **Ref:** Vassaras (Gre)
Milan: Abbiati - Simic, Costacurta (Abate 69), Laursen, Kaladze, Seedorf (Rui Costa 46), Brocchi, Redondo, Serginho, Kaka (Tomasson 46), Borriello.
Celta: Cavallero - Berizzo, Caceres, Juanfran, Silvinho, Angel, Jose Ignacio (Giovanella 81), Jesuli, Luccin, Lopez (Contreras 90), Milosevic (Catanha 85).

GROUP H – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Milan	6	3	1	2	4	3	10
Celta Vigo	6	2	3	1	7	6	9
Club Brugge	6	2	2	2	5	6	8
Ajax	6	2	0	4	6	7	6

Top two from each group qualified for second round; third-placed sides enter UEFA Cup at third round stage

2nd rnd draw

Bayern Munich v Real Madrid
Celta Vigo v Arsenal
Lokomotiv Moscow v Monaco
Sparta Prague v Milan
1st legs, February 24; 2nd legs, March 10

Deportivo La Coruna v Juventus
FC Porto v Manchester United
Real Sociedad v Lyon
Stuttgart v Chelsea
1st legs, February 25; 2nd legs, March 9

UEFA CUP

2nd rnd, 2nd leg

December 11

Maccabi Haifa (Isr) 0
Valencia (Spa) 4 (Mista 11, Baraja 24, Albelda 90, Angulo 90)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Braamhaar (Hol)
(Played in Rotterdam, Holland)
Valencia 4-0 on agg

3rd rnd draw

Auxerre (Fra) v Panathinaikos (Gre)
Benfica (Por) v Rosenborg (Nor)
Brondby (Den) v Barcelona (Spa)
Celtic (Sco) v Teplice (Cze)
Club Brugge (Blg) v Debrecen (Hun)
Galatasaray (Tur) v Villarreal (Spa)
Gaziantepspor (Tur) v Roma (Ita)
Groclin Grodzisk (Pol) v Bordeaux (Fra)
Liverpool (Eng) v Levski Sofia (Bul)
Marseille (Fra) v Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk (Ukr)
Moscow Spartak (Rus) v Mallorca (Spa)
Parma (Ita) v Genclerbirligi (Tur)
Perugia (Ita) v PSV Eindhoven (Hol)
Sochaux (Fra) v Internazionale (Ita)
Valencia (Spa) v Besiktas (Tur)
Valerenga (Nor) v Newcastle (Eng)
1st legs, February 26; 2nd legs, March 3

AUSTRIA

Dec 6: Admira 2 Mattersburg 0; Grazer AK 4 Karnten 1; Pasching 3 Bregenz 0.
Dec 7: Rapid Wien 1 Sturm Graz 1; Salzburg 0 Austria Wien 1.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Austria Wien	20	12	5	3	37	15	41
Rapid Wien	20	11	5	4	35	26	38
Grazer AK	20	11	4	5	32	20	37
Pasching	20	9	4	7	34	30	31
Bregenz	20	9	4	7	30	32	31
Admira	20	7	4	9	26	28	25
Mattersburg	20	5	7	8	21	31	22
Salzburg	20	6	2	12	27	25	20
Sturm Graz	20	4	6	10	20	29	18
Karnten	20	3	5	12	16	42	14

BELGIUM

Friday, December 5

Standard 3 (Mpenza 14, Da Silva Moreira 15, Kimoto 85)
Club Brugge 1 (Simons 79) Att: 22,000

Saturday, December 6

Genk 0
Anderlecht 1 (Mornar 45) Att: 25,061

La Louviere 0
St Truiden 0 Att: 3,554

Lierse 0
Westerlo 1 (Dosunmu 42) Att: 6,500

Lokeren 0
Germinal Beerschot 1 (Victor 26) Att: 5,000

Mouscron 3 (Mpenza 48, Pieroni 66, Dugardein 88)
Charleroi 0 Att: 7,200

Royal Antwerp 0
Gent 1 (De Brul 47) Att: 4,000

Sunday, December 7

Cercle Brugge 0
Beveren 4 (Ne 12, 44, Yapi Yapo 28, Eboue 60) Att: 4,050

Mons 1 (Joly 83)
Heusden-Zolder 2 (Suzuki 78, Barka 86) Att: 3,500

Friday, December 12

Charleroi 0
Standard 1 (Mpenza 90) Att: 10,861

Heusden-Zolder 0
Lierse 0 Att: 4,302

Saturday, December 13

Club Brugge 2 (Englebert 33, Saeternes 88)
Mons 0 Att: 21,689

Germinal Beerschot 2 (Snelders 61, Hoefkens pen 65)
Mouscron 2 (Dugardein pen 9, Pieroni 43) Att: 7,000

St Truiden 2 (Buvens 18, Janssen 73)
Royal Antwerp 1 (Cisse 45) Att: 6,500

Beveren 1 (Diallo 81)
La Louviere 0 Att: 4,000

Sunday, December 14

Anderlecht 3 (Iachtchouk 19, Mornar 40, Baseggio 90)
Cercle Brugge 2 (Vandenbussche 25, Jbari 78) Att: 22,878

Lokeren 1 (De Beule 79)
Gent 1 (Ribus 61) Att: 6,000

Westerlo 1 (Dosunmu 81)
Genk 1 (Vandenbergh 27) Att: 7,500

Saturday, December 20

Genk 4 (Kpaka 11, Roussel 22, 60, Wamfor 68)
Heusden-Zolder 1 (De Conde 77) Att: 23,423

Gent 0
St Truiden 1 (Mbonabucya 37) Att: 7,125

Lierse 1 (De Wilde 28)
Club Brugge 1 (Lange 22) Att: 8,000

Mons 2 (La Placa 72, 75)
Charleroi 2 (Laquait 1, Dufer 70) Att: 4,500

Mouscron 3 (Pieroni 31, 54, Mpenza 44)
Lokeren 0 Att: 5,000

Royal Antwerp 0
Beveren 3 (Yapi Yapo 10, Kaiper 41, 70) Att: 3,500

Sunday, December 21

Cercle Brugge 0
Westerlo 0 Att: 3,650

La Louviere 1 (Murcy 74)
Anderlecht 4 (Mornar 22, Zetterberg 26, Iachtchouk 56, Baseggio 66) Att: 7,000

Standard 2 (Kaklamanos 13, Carini pen 36)
Germinal Beerschot 1 (Van de Weyer 23) Att: 14,500

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anderlecht	17	15	1	1	45	14	46
Standard	17	12	2	3	34	13	38
Genk	17	9	4	4	35	21	31
Mouscron	17	8	6	3	32	19	30
Club Brugge	17	8	4	5	32	22	28
St Truiden	17	7	6	4	21	21	27
Beveren	17	8	0	9	24	27	24
Westerlo	17	6	6	5	19	23	24
Gent	17	5	8	4	19	15	23
Germinal B	17	6	5	6	16	18	23
La Louviere	17	4	8	5	21	22	20
Cercle Brugge	17	4	8	5	13	21	20
Lierse	17	4	7	6	17	20	19
Lokeren	17	3	4	10	18	30	13
Mons	17	2	7	8	14	27	13
Heusden-Zolder	17	3	4	10	14	28	13
Royal Antwerp	17	3	3	11	12	35	12
Charleroi	17	2	5	10	9	19	11

LEADING GOALSCORER
10 Mbo Mpenza (Mouscron)

BULGARIA

Dec 6: Lokomotiv Sofia 1 Chernomorets 1; Rodopa 1 Spartak Varna 1; Belasitsa 2 Marek 1; Cherno More 2 Makedonska 0; Naftex 0 Slavia 1.
Dec 7: Vidima-Rakovski 0 Lovech 2; Levski 3 Botev 1.
Dec 8: Lokomotiv Plovdiv 3 CSKA 1.

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lok Plovdiv	15	12	1	2	35	12	37
CSKA	15	11	2	2	33	12	35
Slavia	15	11	1	3	34	15	34
Levski	15	10	4	1	26	9	34
Lovech	15	9	5	1	22	9	32
Marek	15	7	0	8	21	26	21
Naftex	15	5	4	6	24	18	19
Lok Sofia	15	4	6	5	22	24	18
Spartak Varna	15	5	3	7	19	21	18
Vidima-Rakovski	15	4	4	7	17	24	16
Chernomorets	15	3	5	7	16	24	14
Cherno More	15	3	5	7	17	28	14
Rodopa	15	4	2	9	13	26	14
Belasitsa	15	4	1	10	15	32	13
Makedonska	15	3	1	11	16	30	10
Botev	15	2	2	11	17	37	8

CROATIA

Dec 6: Inker 0 Zadar 2; Kamen Ingrad 3 Cibalia 2; Zagreb 1 Varteks 1; Hajduk 3 Dinamo 1; Slaven 3 Marsonia 1; Osijek 2 Rijeka 3.

CROATIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hajduk	17	13	1	3	33	14	40
Dinamo	17	11	4	2	40	15	37
Kamen Ingrad	17	7	4	6	28	21	25
Osijek	17	7	2	8	27	31	23
Zadar	17	6	5	6	30	36	23
Rijeka	17	5	7	5	22	20	22
Inker	17	5	7	5	20	20	22
Slaven	17	5	7	5	17	18	22
Varteks	17	4	7	6	16	20	19
Zagreb	17	3	8	6	18	26	17
Cibalia	17	3	4	10	20	31	13
Marsonia	17	3	4	10	20	39	13

DENMARK

Dec 6: Nordsjaelland 1 AGF 3.
Dec 7: Esbjerg 3 OB 3; Herfolge 0 Viborg 1; Midtjylland 3 Frem 3; FC Copenhagen 3 AB 1; AaB 1 Brondby 1.

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brondby	20	14	4	2	35	14	46
Esbjerg	20	13	4	3	39	21	43
FC Copenhagen	20	11	6	3	31	16	39
OB	20	10	5	5	41	30	35
AaB	20	8	6	6	30	27	30
Midtjylland	20	7	5	8	35	31	26
AGF	20	8	2	10	31	41	26
Viborg	20	6	6	8	31	29	24
Herfolge	20	5	5	10	21	28	20
Nordsjaelland	20	4	6	10	25	38	18
Frem	20	4	3	13	22	39	15
AB	20	3	2	15	17	44	11

ENGLAND

Saturday, December 6

Birmingham 0
Blackburn 4 (Ferguson 66, Neill 68, Tugay 82, Gallagher 88) Att: 29,354

Fulham 2 (Davis 75, Sava 76)
Bolton 1 (Davies 53) Att: 14,393

Leeds 1 (Pennant 18)
Chelsea 1 (Duff 70) Att: 36,305

Leicester 1 (Hignett 90)
Arsenal 1 (Gilberto Silva 60) Att: 32,108

Manchester Utd 4 (Van Nistelrooy 16, 45, Forlan 89, 90)
Aston Villa 0 Att: 67,621

Middlesbrough 0
Portsmouth 0 Att: 28,031

Newcastle 1 (Shearer pen 63)
Liverpool 1 (Murphy 6) Att: 52,151

Tottenham 5 (Keane 29, 75, 83, Kanoute 50, Dalmat 90)
Wolverhampton 2 (Ince 30, Rae 84) Att: 34,825

Sunday, December 7

Everton 0
Manchester City 0 Att: 37,871

Southampton 3 (M Svensson 6, Ormerod 45, 86)
Charlton 2 (Parker 46, 65) Att: 30,513

Saturday, December 13

Chelsea 1 (Crespo 22)
Bolton 2 (N'Gotty 39, Terry og 90) Att: 40,491

Leicester 0
Birmingham 2 (Morrison 32, Forssell 66) Att: 30,639

Liverpool 1 (Heskey 75)
Southampton 2 (Ormerod 2, M Svensson 64) Att: 41,762

Manchester Utd 3 (Scholes 7, 73, Van Nistelrooy 34)
Manchester City 1 (Wright-Phillips 62) Att: 67,645

Middlesbrough 0
Charlton 0 Att: 26,721

Newcastle 4 (Robert 35, 55, Shearer 59, 66)
Tottenham 0 Att: 52,139

Portsmouth 1 (Roberts 15)
Everton 2 (Carsley 27, Rooney 42) Att: 20,101

Sunday, December 14

Arsenal 1 (Bergkamp 11)
Blackburn 0 Att: 37,677

Aston Villa 3 (Angel 21, 24, Barry 48)
Wolverhampton 2 (Rae 36, Kennedy 80) Att: 36,964

Leeds 3 (Duberry 41, Viduka 46, Matteo 88)
Fulham 2 (Saha 47, 86) Att: 30,544

Saturday, December 20

Blackburn 0
Aston Villa 2 (Moore 62, Angel 75) Att: 20,722

Bolton 1 (Pedersen 83)
Arsenal 1 (Pires 57) Att: 28,003

Charlton 0
Newcastle 0 Att: 26,508

Everton 3 (Howey og 33, Rooney 71, Radzinski 79)
Leicester 2 (Ferdinand 45, Scowcroft 58) Att: 40,200

Fulham 0
Chelsea 1 (Crespo 62) Att: 18,244

Sunday, December 21

Southampton 3 (Dodd 34, Pahars 68, Beattie 90)
Portsmouth 0 Att: 31,697

Tottenham 1 (Poyet 64)
Manchester Utd 2 (O'Shea 15, Van Nistelrooy 26) Att: 35,910

Monday, December 22

Manchester City 1 (Sibierski 82)
Leeds 1 (Viduka 24) Att: 47,126

Friday, December 26

Arsenal 3 (Craddock og 13, Henry 20, 90)
Wolverhampton 0 Att: 38,003

Birmingham 2 (Kenna 81, Forssell 87)
Manchester City 1 (Fowler 14) Att: 29,520

Blackburn 2 (Babbel 3, 90)
Middlesbrough 2 (Juninho 31, 51) Att: 25,452

Charlton 4 (Hreidarsson 1, Holland 35, Johansson 48, Euell 53)
Chelsea 2 (Terry 10, Gudjohnsen 73) Att: 26,768

Fulham 2 (Saha 19, pen 63)
Southampton 0 Att: 16,767

Leeds 0
Aston Villa 0 Att: 38,513

Leicester 1 (Dickov 67)
Newcastle 1 (Ambrose 90) Att: 32,148

Liverpool 3 (Hyypia 30, Sinama-Pongolle 47, Smicer 54)
Bolton 1 (Pedersen 85) Att: 42,987

Manchester Utd 3 (Butt 9, Kleberson 44, Bellion 68)
Everton 2 (G Neville og 13, Ferguson 90) Att: 67,642

Portsmouth 2 (Berger 52, 68)
Tottenham 0 Att: 20,078

Sunday, December 28

Aston Villa 3 (Angel 33, 82, Vassell 67)
Fulham 0 Att: 35,617

Bolton 2 (N'Gotty 35, Ivan Campo 54)
Leicester 2 (Bent 18, Ferdinand 90) Att: 28,353

Chelsea 3 (Bridge 64, Lampard 71, Geremi 80)
Portsmouth 0 Att: 41,552

Everton 1 (Rooney 69)
Birmingham 0 Att: 39,631

Manchester City 2 (Anelka pen 30, Fowler 90)
Liverpool 2 (Smicer 66, Hamann 81) Att: 47,201

Middlesbrough 0
Manchester Utd 1 (Mills og 14) Att: 34,738

Newcastle 0
Blackburn 1 (Gallagher 72) Att: 51,648

Tottenham 0
Charlton 1 (Cole 69) Att: 34,534

Wolverhampton 3 (Smith og 18, Iversen 48, 90)
Leeds 1 (Duberry 3) Att: 29,139

Monday, December 29

Southampton 0
Arsenal 1 (Pires 35) Att: 32,151

Tuesday, January 6

Aston Villa 2 (Angel 22, Vassell 85)
Portsmouth 1 (Aiyegbeni 49) Att: 28,625

Wednesday, January 7

Bolton 1 (Djorkaeff 89)
Manchester Utd 2 (Scholes 24, Van Nistelrooy 39) Att: 27,668

Chelsea 0
Liverpool 1 (Cheyrou 33) Att: 41,420

Everton 1 (Radzinski 75)
Arsenal 1 (Kanu 29) Att: 38,726

Manchester City 1 (Fowler 39)
Charlton 1 (Di Canio 84) Att: 44,307

Middlesbrough 2 (Job 15, Nemeth 67)
Fulham 1 (Hayles 90) Att: 27,869

Newcastle 1 (Shearer 4)
Leeds 0 Att: 52,130

Southampton 0
Leicester 0 Att: 31,053

Tottenham 4 (Dalmat 10, 24, Davies 39, Keane 79)
Birmingham 1 (Savage pen 68) Att: 30,016

Wolverhampton 2 (Butler 63, Rae 72)
Blackburn 2 (Cole 14, Yorke 78) Att: 27,393

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	20	16	1	3	40	14	49
Arsenal	20	13	7	0	36	13	46
Chelsea	20	13	3	4	36	17	42
Charlton	20	8	7	5	28	23	31
Liverpool	19	8	5	6	29	21	29
Newcastle	20	7	8	5	27	22	29
Fulham	20	8	4	8	31	28	28
Southampton	20	7	6	7	18	15	27
Aston Villa	20	7	6	7	21	24	27
Birmingham	19	7	5	7	17	24	26
Everton	20	6	6	8	24	26	24
Middlesbrough	19	6	6	7	16	19	24
Bolton	20	5	8	7	21	30	23
Man City	20	5	7	8	28	28	22
Blackburn	20	6	4	10	28	31	22
Tottenham	20	6	3	11	23	30	21
Leicester	20	4	7	9	28	31	19
Portsmouth	20	5	4	11	21	30	19
Leeds	20	4	5	11	18	41	17
Wolverhampton	19	3	6	10	18	41	15

LEADING GOALSCORERS
16 Alan Shearer (Newcastle)
14 Ruud Van Nistelrooy (Manchester Utd)
12 Thierry Henry (Arsenal)
12 Louis Saha (Fulham)

FRANCE

Friday, December 5

Lyon 2 (Luyindula 27, Edmilson 48)
Metz 1 (Jager 21) Att: 32,000

Marseille 1 (Hossam 44)
Monaco 2 (Squillaci 59, Giuly 66) Att: 55,000

Saturday, December 6

Ajaccio 1 (Bagayoko 50)
Auxerre 2 (Mexes 16, Cisse 65) Att: 4,500

Bordeaux 2 (Pichot og 9, Francia 13)
Lille 1 (Caneira og 49) Att: 21,000

Lens 0
Sochaux 3 (Santos 14, 78, Mathieu 75) Att: 34,000

Nantes 1 (Gillet pen 19)
Toulouse 1 (Dieuze pen 45) Att: 29,000

Rennes 1 (Frei 73)
Paris SG 1 (Fiorese 48) Att: 18,000

Strasbourg 4 (Ljuboja 15, Le Pen 38, Niang 45, Ehret 54)
Bastia 2 (Hadji 39, 71) Att: 10,000

Sunday, December 7

Le Mans 2 (Cousin 33, Celdran 78)
Guingamp 0 Att: 12,000

Nice 2 (Everson 23, Laslandes 35)
Montpellier 1 (Bamogo pen 86) Att: 10,500

Saturday, December 13

Auxerre 2 (Kalou 17, Cisse 84)
Lens 0 Att: 12,000

Bastia 0
Lyon 0 Att: 5,492

Guingamp 1 (Bourhani 69)
Nantes 1 (Vahirua 27) Att: 15,139

Lille 1 (Manchev 78)
Le Mans 1 (Fischer 43) Att: 11,994

Metz 1 (Jager 37)
Rennes 1 (Monterrubio 90) Att: 13,272

Paris SG 2 (Reinaldo 36, Pauleta 47)
Bordeaux 1 (Celades 18) Att: 41,152

Sochaux 2 (Frau 36, Santos 66)
Ajaccio 0 Att: 15,699

Toulouse 1 (Eduardo 8)
Nice 1 (Echouafni 58) Att: 13,441

Sunday, December 14

Monaco 2 (Prso 44, 76)
Strasbourg 0 Att: 5,100

Friday, December 19

Lyon 1 (Carriere 84)
Paris SG 1 (Pauleta 40) Att: 37,000

Saturday, December 20

Ajaccio 2 (Bonnal 12, Demont 84)
Lens 0 Att: 2,500

Bastia 0
Lille 2 (Manchev pen 29, 51) Att: 5,000

Bordeaux 2 (Francia 45, Chamakh 61)
Metz 0 Att: 19,500

Le Mans 2 (Cousin 27, 56)
Sochaux 2 (Santos 49, Zairi 66) Att: 12,600

Marseille 1 (Drogba 62)
Toulouse 0 Att: 51,000

Nantes 1 (Da Rocha 2)
Auxerre 0 Att: 30,000

Nice 2 (Traore 35, Laslandes 87)
Guingamp 0 Att: 10,000

Rennes 1 (Barbosa 48)
Monaco 0 Att: 19,000

Strasbourg 4 (Le Pen pen 32, 63, Mouloungui 41, Bassila 54)
Montpellier 2 (Carotti 28, Lafourcade 39) Att: 15,373

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monaco	18	13	3	2	32	14	42
Lyon	18	10	5	3	32	14	35
Paris SG	19	10	5	4	25	16	35
Sochaux	18	10	4	4	29	18	34
Auxerre	19	10	2	7	30	18	32
Marseille	17	10	0	7	24	17	30
Nice	18	7	8	3	18	15	29
Lens	19	9	1	9	16	28	28
Nantes	19	8	3	8	19	18	27
Strasbourg	19	7	5	7	30	27	26
Bordeaux	18	7	5	6	18	16	26
Rennes	19	5	8	6	20	19	23
Bastia	19	6	5	8	23	30	23
Lille	19	5	7	7	21	24	22
Montpellier	17	6	3	8	25	28	21
Ajaccio	19	5	4	10	17	26	19
Metz	18	4	4	10	14	21	16
Le Mans	19	3	7	9	17	30	16
Guingamp	19	4	3	12	16	30	15
Toulouse	19	2	6	11	13	30	12

LEADING GOALSCORERS
14 Djibril Cisse (Auxerre)
12 Vladimir Manchev (Lille)
10 Francileudo Santos (Sochaux)

GERMANY

Saturday, December 6

Borussia Dortmund 1 (Leandro 69)
Hertha 1 (Madlung 79) Att: 77,000

Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Schur 17, Skela pen 64)
Hannover 2 (Stendel 18, Christiansen pen 87) Att: 19,000

Freiburg 4 (Antar 3, 11, 79, Sanou 22)
Bochum 2 (Hashemian 13, Madsen 24) Att: 24,500

1860 Munich 1 (Weissenberger 3)
Hansa Rostock 4 (Rydlewicz 8, Max pen 17, 80, Schultz 67) Att: 13,000

Stuttgart 0
Hamburg 0 Att: 41,000

Werder Bremen 1 (Ailton pen 58)
Bayern Munich 1 (Pizarro 79) Att: 43,000

Wolfsburg 4 (Fernando Baiano 23, 53, 55, Schnoor pen 90)
Kaiserslautern 1 (Knavs 13) Att: 17,331

Sunday, December 7

Koln 0
Bayer Leverkusen 0 Att: 40,000

Schalke 2 (Seitz 1, 54)
Monchengladbach 1 (Ulich 43) Att: 61,266

Saturday, December 13

Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Nowotny 72)
Werder Bremen 3 (Ailton 42, Krstajic 44, Lisztes 90) Att: 22,500

Bayern Munich 1 (Makaay 75)
Stuttgart 0 Att: 63,000

Bochum 1 (Hashemian 21)
Eintracht Frankfurt 0 Att: 23,129

Hamburg 4 (Reinhardt 7, Barbarez 18, Maltritz 67, Rahn 88)
Freiburg 1 (Antar 51) Att: 43,392

Hansa Rostock 1 (Prica 64)
Koln 1 (Podolski 34) Att: 20,200

Hertha 1 (Costa og 53)
1860 Munich 1 (Lauth 57) Att: 27,112

Kaiserslautern 0
Schalke 2 (Asamoah 6, Agali 85) Att: 40,034

Sunday, December 14

Monchengladbach 2 (Demo 11, Asanin 83)
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Koller 12) Att: 34,000

Wolfsburg 2 (Fernando Baiano 29, Petrov 68)
Hannover 1 (Stendel 14) Att: 30,000

Tuesday, December 16

Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Skela 53, Beierle 66)
Hamburg 3 (Beinlich 17, Takahara 52, Barbarez 85) Att: 21,000

Freiburg 0
Bayern Munich 6 (Demichelis 7, Salihamidzic 24, Makaay 29, 67, Pizarro 61, Trochowski 87) Att: 25,000

Koln 3 (Voronin 46, Podolski 75, Scherz 87)
Hertha 0 Att: 35,000

Werder Bremen 3 (Ailton 3, Ismael 78, Lisztes 89)
Hansa Rostock 0 Att: 32,754

Wednesday, December 17

Borussia Dortmund 1 (Koller 45)
Kaiserslautern 1 (Lincoln 76) Att: 73,000

Hannover 2 (Brdaric 18, De Guzman 62)
Bochum 2 (Madsen 53, Hashemian 75) Att: 20,396

1860 Munich 1 (Lauth 62)
Monchengladbach 2 (Ulich 15, Van Lent 83) Att: 15,100

Schalke 1 (Altintop 26)
Wolfsburg 1 (Petrov 40) Att: 59,775

Stuttgart 2 (Kuranyi 56, Soldo 68)
Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Ramelow 24, Berbatov 45, 62) Att: 47,000

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Werder Bremen	17	12	3	2	45	20	39
Bayern Munich	17	10	5	2	40	19	35
B Leverkusen	17	10	5	2	34	17	35
Stuttgart	17	10	5	2	24	7	35
Bochum	17	7	5	5	30	22	26
B Dortmund	17	7	4	6	29	25	25
Wolfsburg	17	8	1	8	35	32	25
Schalke	17	6	6	5	23	23	24
Hamburg	17	6	5	6	23	29	23
Freiburg	17	6	3	8	24	37	21
Hannover	17	5	5	7	30	37	20
Hansa Rostock	17	5	4	8	24	27	19
M'gladbach	17	5	4	8	18	24	19
1860 Munich	17	5	4	8	18	26	19
Kaiserslautern*	17	5	3	9	20	31	15
Koln	17	3	4	10	15	26	13
Hertha	17	2	7	8	15	33	13
Eintracht F'furt	17	3	3	11	16	28	12

**3pts deducted for failing to supply accurate information when re-applying for professional licence*

LEADING GOALSCORERS
16 Ailton (Werder Bremen)
12 Martin Max (Hansa Rostock)
11 Vahid Hashemian (Bochum)
10 Roy Makaay (Bayern Munich)

GREECE

Dec 6: Olympiakos 1 Halkidona 0; Akratitos 0 Panathinaikos 0.
Dec 7: Kallithea 1 OFI 2; AEK 3 Xanthi 0; Iraklis 2 Proodeftiki 1; Ionikos 4 Paniliakos 2; Aigaleo 3 Aris 1; PAOK 2 Panionios 0.
Dec 13: Kallithea 0 Aigaleo 1; Halkidona 1 PAOK 2.
Dec 14: Xanthi 2 Ionikos 0; Panionios 6 Akratitos 1; Panathinaikos 3 Proodeftiki 1; OFI 0 AEK 2; Paniliakos 1 Iraklis 2; Aris 0 Olympiakos 3.
Dec 20: AEK 1 Kallithea 1; Akratitos 2 Halkidona 4.
Dec 21: Aigaleo 1 Olympiakos 2; PAOK 3 Aris 0; Ionikos 2 OFI 0; Iraklis 3 Xanthi 0; Proodeftiki 0 Panionios 3; Panathinaikos 6 Paniliakos 3.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiakos	15	12	2	1	34	9	38
Panathinaikos	15	10	4	1	30	11	34
PAOK	15	10	2	3	25	13	32
Aigaleo	15	9	3	3	19	10	30
AEK	15	8	4	3	32	15	28
Iraklis	15	6	4	5	20	17	22
Panionios	15	5	6	4	23	18	21
Halkidona	15	5	5	5	20	20	20
OFI	15	5	3	7	15	26	18
Xanthi	15	4	4	7	15	22	16
Ionikos	15	4	3	8	19	25	15
Paniliakos	15	3	5	7	23	29	14
Aris	15	3	3	9	13	25	12
Kallithea	15	1	8	6	20	24	11
Proodeftiki	15	1	6	8	9	25	9
Akratitos	15	1	4	10	14	42	7

HOLLAND

Saturday, December 6

NEC 1 (Wielaert pen 57)
RKC 1 (Greene 88) Att: 11,500

PSV 7 (Kezman 12, 50, 55, 57, Vennegoor of Hesselink 19, 67, De Jong 78)
Volendam 0 Att: 32,500

Willem II 0
Utrecht 2 (Keller 60, Van de Haar 72) Att: 12,900

Sunday, December 7

Feyenoord 4 (Van Persie 24, 47, Van Wonderen 45, Pardo 58)
Den Haag 1 (Van der Gun 14) Att: 40,800

NAC 2 (Venema og 7, Slot 90)
Heerenveen 3 (Sibon 5, 15, De Lange 45) Att: 12,100

RBC 1 (De Graaf 63)
AZ 0 Att: 4,900

Vitesse 5 (Mbamba 4, Hofs 17, 73, Claessens 20, Van Beukering 55)
Zwolle 2 (Takak 40, Hristov 58) Att: 16,500

Friday, December 12

Roda JC 2 (Cristiano 7, 19)
NAC 2 (Elmander 57, Engelaar pen 90) Att: 12,500

Saturday, December 13

Den Haag 0
Willem II 1 (Quinn 35) Att: 5,211

PSV 3 (Lucius 2, 74, Robben 55)
RKC 1 (Teixeira 37) Att: 33,500

RBC 1 (Youssouf 38)
Heerenveen 1 (Samaras 75) Att: 5,000

Twente 4 (N'Kufo 10, 30, John 56, Polak pen 67)
Feyenoord 2 (Kuijt 44, Pardo 86) Att: 13,250

Sunday, December 14

Ajax 1 (Van der Vaart 76)
Utrecht 0 Att: 46,972

NEC 2 (Ebbinge 30, Govedarica 43)
Vitesse 0 Att: 12,500

Volendam 0
AZ 6 (Huysegems 28, Buskermolen 44, El Khattabi 59, 76, Perez 68, 78) Att: 6,000

Zwolle 1 (Lim-Duan 31)
Groningen 1 (Hugo 50) Att: 5,300

Saturday, December 20

Heerenveen 2 (Samaras 7, Selakovic 78)
Roda JC 1 (Cristiano 89) Att: 14,300

NAC 3 (Engelaar 5, 44, Boussaboun 28)
RBC 2 (Ikedia 32, De Graaf 63) Att: 12,238

NEC 1 (Hersi 43)
Zwolle 0 Att: 11,250

Vitesse 0
PSV 0 Att: 19,750

Sunday, December 21

Groningen 1 (Van Gessel 26)
Willem II 2 (Hadouir 63, 81) Att: 12,750

RKC 0
Feyenoord 0 Att: 6,500

Twente 2 (N'Kufo 38, 60)
Ajax 0 Att: 13,250

Utrecht 3 (Zwaanswijk 14, 31, Tanghe pen 22)
Volendam 0 Att: 11,448

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV	16	11	4	1	44	13	37
Ajax	15	12	1	2	39	16	37
AZ	16	10	2	4	34	17	32
Feyenoord	16	8	4	4	30	21	28
Willem II	16	8	3	5	26	24	27
Heerenveen	16	8	2	6	20	19	26
Twente	16	8	1	7	31	28	25
Utrecht	16	7	4	5	21	18	25
Roda JC	15	5	6	4	26	19	21
RBC	16	5	6	5	16	18	21
Groningen	16	5	5	6	22	25	20
NEC	16	6	1	9	19	27	19
NAC	16	5	3	8	25	25	18
RKC	16	4	5	7	19	22	17
Vitesse	16	2	7	7	23	30	13
Volendam	16	3	4	9	17	44	13
Den Haag	16	2	4	10	12	35	10
Zwolle	16	1	4	11	9	32	7

LEADING GOALSCORERS
15 Mateja Kezman (PSV)
12 Ali El Khattabi (AZ)
9 Blaise N'Kufo (Twente)

HUNGARY

Dec 6: Matav 2 Bekescsaba 2.

HUNGARY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Balaton	16	10	2	4	19	7	32
MTK	16	7	6	3	25	15	27
Debrecen	16	8	3	5	24	14	27
Ferencvaros*	16	9	5	2	23	15	26
Pecs	16	6	5	5	17	16	23
Matav	16	6	4	6	21	22	22
Videoton	16	5	6	5	22	22	21
Ujpest	16	4	8	4	20	19	20
Gyor	16	4	4	8	17	21	16
Haladas	16	3	7	6	11	26	16
Bekescsaba	16	3	5	8	15	23	14
Zalaegerszeg	16	3	1	12	18	32	10

**6pts deducted because of a pitch invasion by Ferencvaros supporters during a game last season*

ITALY

Saturday, December 6

Empoli 0
Milan 1 (Kaka 81) Att: 12,791

Lazio 2 (Corradi 21, Fiore 45)
Juventus 0 Att: 60,931

Sunday, December 7

Bologna 3 (Bilica og 2, Nervo 28, Signori 47)
Ancona 2 (Troise og 70, Pandev 79) Att: 20,133

Chievo 0
Roma 3 (Totti 67, Mancini 69, Cassano 72) Att: 18,023

Inter 2 (Vieri 25, 80)
Perugia 1 (Tedesco 88) Att: 53,815

Lecce 1 (Chevanton pen 73)
Parma 2 (Gilardino 47, 78) Att: 55,567

Modena 1 (Taldo 81)
Brescia 1 (Bachini 84) Att: 14,573

Sampdoria 2 (Flachi 1, Bazzani 72)
Siena 1 (D'Aversa 38) Att: 24,353

Udinese 1 (Jancker 87)
Reggina 0 Att: 15,065

Saturday, December 13

Perugia 3 (Ignoffo 39, Margiotta 55, Tedesco 58)
Sampdoria 3 (Flachi 16, 89, Tardioli og 60) Att: 13,358

Udinese 1 (Pinzi 30)
Lecce 0 Att: 15,162

Sunday, December 14

Ancona 0
Lazio 1 (Liverani 71) Att: 11,366

Bologna 0
Inter 2 (Martins 29, Recoba 39) Att: 27,411

Brescia 2 (Mauri 12, Di Biagio 17)
Empoli 0 Att: 10,433

Juventus 4 (Miccoli 10, 32, Del Piero 71, Nedved 73)
Parma 0 Att: 31,768

Reggina 0
Chievo 0 Att: 18,798

Roma 1 (Totti pen 8)
Modena 0 Att: 47,046

Saturday, December 20

Empoli 0
Roma 2 (Totti pen 23, 45) Att: 12,124

Parma 1 (Gilardino pen 85)
Reggina 2 (Di Michele 27, Cozza 90) Att: 11,463

Sunday, December 21

Chievo 1 (Cossato 41)
Ancona 0 Att: 9,043

Lazio 2 (Corradi 42, Zauri 82)
Inter 1 (Vieri 30) Att: 58,636

Lecce 1 (Konan 24)
Juventus 1 (Trezeguet 87) Att: 30,625

Milan 1 (Cafu 70)
Udinese 2 (Fava 2, Sensini 51) Att: 53,381

Perugia 2 (Margiotta 5, Dainelli og 72)
Brescia 2 (Di Biagio 10, Filippini 77) Att: 8,138

Sampdoria 1 (Bazzani 60)
Modena 1 (Kamara 22) Att: 24,085

Siena 0
Bologna 0 Att: 9,500

Tuesday, January 6

Ancona 0
Parma 2 (Barone 27, 64) Att: 10,433

Bologna 2 (Bellucci 33, Pecchia 75)
Empoli 1 (Di Natale 19) Att: 18,370

Brescia 4 (Mauri 15, 87, Baggio 21, 52)
Siena 2 (Argilli 45, Flo 46) Att: 11,864

Inter 3 (Cruz 49, Cordoba 59, Vieri 84)
Lecce 1 (Bovo 3) Att: 52,651

Juventus 1 (Nedved 29)
Perugia 0 Att: 31,029

Modena 0
Chievo 3 (Cossato 43, Lanna 68, Barzagli 76) Att: 13,870

Reggina 2 (Di Michele 60, Cozza 69)
Lazio 1 (Liverani 16) Att: 19,858

Roma 1 (Cassano 45)
Milan 2 (Shevchenko 24, 63) Att: 73,383

Udinese 0
Sampdoria 1 (Flachi 57) Att: 16,589

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Roma	15	11	3	1	32	6	36
Juventus	15	10	3	2	32	15	33
Milan	14	10	3	1	24	7	33
Inter	15	9	4	2	28	10	31
Lazio	15	9	1	5	24	19	28
Parma	15	8	3	4	24	18	27
Sampdoria	15	6	6	3	18	15	24
Udinese	15	7	3	5	19	17	24
Chievo	15	6	3	6	17	18	21
Reggina	15	3	8	4	14	22	17
Brescia	15	3	7	5	25	28	16
Modena	15	4	4	7	12	18	16
Siena	14	3	6	5	18	16	15
Bologna	15	3	5	7	14	22	14
Perugia	15	0	9	6	19	30	9
Lecce	15	2	3	10	15	31	9
Empoli	15	1	3	11	8	30	6
Ancona	15	0	4	11	7	28	4

LEADING GOALSCORERS
14 Andrii Shevchenko (Milan)
9 Francesco Totti (Roma)
9 Christian Vieri (Inter)
8 Dino Fava (Udinese)
8 David Trezeguet (Juventus)

PORTUGAL

Friday, December 5

Boavista 1 (Eder 16)
Moreirense 0

Maritimo 2 (Rincon 18, 66)
FC Porto 2 (Derlei pen 22, 36)

Sunday, December 7

Alverca 2 (Alex Afonso 13, 45)
Academica 1 (Marinescu 54)

Estrela Amadora 1 (Julio Cesar 35)
Sporting Lisbon 4 (Rochemback 15, Pedro Barbosa 40, Liedson 67, 89)

Gil Vicente 4 (Josiesley Ferreira 6, Edinho 30, Casquilha 45, Lary pen 54)
Nacional 4 (Serginho Baiano 10, Paulo Assuncao 19, Adriano 28, Patacas 60)

Pacos Ferreira 0
Benfica 3 (Joao Pereira 27, 44, Fernando Aguiar 64)

Rio Ave 1 (Evandro 49)
Guimaraes 0

Sporting Braga 3 (Wender pen 19, Soderstrom 55, Pena 83)
Uniao Leiria 1 (Joao Paulo 82)

Monday, December 8

Beira Mar 2 (Wijnhard 77, Rui Dolores 89)
Belenenses 0

Friday, December 12

Guimaraes 1 (Flavio Meireles 66)
Pacos Ferreira 1 (Ze Manuel 56)

Saturday, December 13

Academica 0
Rio Ave 0

Benfica 2 (Simao 37, Sokota 84)
Sporting Braga 0

Sporting Lisbon 1 (Silva 31)
Boavista 0

Uniao Leiria 4 (Maciel 2, 90, Joao Paulo 19, Edson 75)
Estrela Amadora 1 (Julio Cesar 3)

Sunday, December 14

Belenenses 2 (Mauro 10, Valdiran 90)
Alverca 0

Moreirense 0
Gil Vicente 0

Nacional 0
Maritimo 1 (Alan 80)

FC Porto 3 (Wijnhard og 10, McCarthy 76, Maniche 78)
Beira Mar 0

Friday, December 19

Boavista 0
Gil Vicente 3 (Edinho 45, Luis Loureiro 63, Josiesley Ferreira 90)

Saturday, December 20

Sporting Lisbon 2 (Lourenco 75, Pedro Barbosa pen 80)
Uniao Leiria 0

Sunday, December 21

Beira Mar 1 (Juninho Petrolina 69)
Nacional 0

Estrela Amadora 0
Benfica 3 (Nuno Gomes 2, Tiago 9, Sokota 33)

Maritimo 1 (Danny 24)
Moreirense 0

Pacos Ferreira 1 (Junior 47)
Academica 0

Rio Ave 4 (Evandro 31, 45, Van Es pen 56, Jacques 72)
Belenenses 1 (Valdiran 53)

Sporting Braga 2 (Soderstrom 12, Wender pen 38)
Guimaraes 1 (Marco 90)

Monday, December 22

Alverca 1 (Manu 27)
FC Porto 2 (Derlei 16, Maniche 35)

Saturday, January 3

Belenenses 0
Pacos Ferreira 2 (Puntas 1, Ze Manel 7)

ESM GOLDEN SHOE STANDINGS AT 04.01.04

pos	name	team	goals	factor	pts
1	Ara Hakopian	Banants (Arm)	45	1	45
2	Tor Henning Hamre	Flora Tallinn (Est)	39	1	39
3	Viktors Dobrecovs	Metalurgs Liepaja (Lat)	36	1	36
4	Ailton	Werder Bremen (Ger)	16	2	32
5	Alan Shearer	Newcastle (Eng)	15	2	30
6	Djibril Cisse	Auxerre (Fra)	14	2	28
	Ronaldo	Real Madrid (Spa)	14	2	28
8	Roland Kollmann	Grazer AK (Aut)	18	1.5	27
9	Girts Karlsons	Metalurgs Liepaja (Lat)	26	1	26
	Ruud Van Nistelrooy	Manchester Utd (Eng)	13	2	26
11	Harald Brattbakk	Rosenborg (Nor)	17	1.5	25.5
12	Thierry Henry	Arsenal (Eng)	12	2	24
	Henrik Larsson	Celtic (Sco)	16	1.5	24
	Vladimir Manchev	Lille (Fra)	12	2	24
	Martin Max	Hansa Rostock (Ger)	12	2	24
	Louis Saha	Fulham (Eng)	12	2	24
	Andrii Shevchenko	Milan (Ita)	12	2	24
18	Frode Johnsen	Rosenborg (Nor)	15	1.5	22.5
	Mateja Kezman	PSV Eindhoven (Hol)	15	1.5	22.5

For the latest standings, updated weekly, visit www.worldsoccer.com

Sunday, January 4

Benfica 1 (Luisao 56)
Sporting Lisbon 3 (Rochemback pen 8, Silva 33, Sa Pinto 90)

Boavista 1 (Cafu 80)
Uniao Leiria 0

Gil Vicente 2 (Ferreira II 42, Fabio Januario 57)
Maritimo 1 (Van der Gaag 73)

Guimaraes 1 (Nuno Assis 48)
Estrela Amadora 0

Moreirense 3 (Vitor Perreira 40, Primo 45, Lito 68)
Beira Mar 1 (Kingsley 47)

Nacional 3 (Serginho Baiano 16, Serginho 20, Alexandre Goulart 88)
Alverca 0

Monday, January 5

Academica 0
Sporting Braga 1 (Igor 23)

FC Porto 1 (McCarthy pen 90)
Rio Ave 0

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Porto	16	13	3	0	37	11	42
Sporting Lisbon	16	12	1	3	31	16	37
Benfica	16	10	3	3	31	14	33
Sporting Braga	16	9	3	4	18	15	30
Beira Mar	16	9	2	5	25	19	29
Maritimo	16	7	6	3	18	15	27
Boavista	16	7	5	4	15	11	26
Nacional	16	7	1	8	26	18	22
Gil Vicente	16	5	5	6	24	20	20
Rio Ave	16	5	5	6	18	15	20
Belenenses	16	4	6	6	20	27	18
Alverca	16	5	2	9	17	22	17
Uniao Leiria	16	5	2	9	18	27	17
Moreirense	16	4	4	8	12	21	16
Academica	16	4	3	9	13	19	15
Guimaraes	16	3	5	8	17	23	14
Pacos Ferreira	16	4	1	11	9	25	13
Estrela Amadora	16	2	1	13	10	41	7

LEADING GOALSCORERS
13 Derlei (FC Porto)
8 Adriano (Nacional)
8 Simao Sabrosa (Benfica)

ROMANIA

Dec 6: Gloria 1 Poli AEK 1; Brasov 2 Oradea 1; Rapid 1 Arges 0; Bacau 1 Otelul 0.
Dec 7: Dinamo 7 Ceahlaul 0; Petrolul 0 Apulum 2; U Craiova 1 National 0; Farul 2 Steaua 1.

ROMANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	15	10	2	3	38	19	32
Steaua	15	9	5	1	23	6	32
Rapid	15	8	5	2	25	15	29
U Craiova	15	6	5	4	18	15	23
Apulum	15	6	4	5	16	21	22
Otelul	15	5	5	5	13	13	20
Poli AEK	15	4	8	3	14	15	20
Farul	15	5	4	6	21	23	19
National	15	5	4	6	18	20	19
Brasov	15	5	3	7	20	27	18
Bacau	15	4	5	6	18	27	17
Arges	15	4	4	7	17	16	16
Gloria	15	4	4	7	18	26	16
Oradea	15	4	3	8	21	21	15
Ceahlaul	15	4	3	8	16	28	15
Petrolul	15	3	4	8	16	20	13

SCOTLAND

Saturday, December 6

Dundee 1 (Novo pen 32)
Kilmarnock 2 (Nish 8, Boyd 37) Att: 6,954

Dunfermline 2 (Derek Young 21, Wilson 62)
Hearts 1 (Maybury 41) Att: 6,199

Livingston 0
Celtic 2 (Sutton 48, Thompson 85) Att: 9,523

Rangers 2 (Capucho 17, Lovenkrands 20)
Dundee Utd 1 (Dodds 56) Att: 49,307

Sunday, December 7

Aberdeen 3 (Hinds 26, Booth 85, pen 90)
Hibernian 1 (Dobbie 57) Att: 7,863

Partick 1 (McBride 59)
Motherwell 0 Att: 4,124

Saturday, December 13

Celtic 3 (Larsson 15, Balde 69, Kennedy 87)
Dundee 2 (Fotheringham 20, Mair 90) Att: 57,573

Dundee Utd 2 (Dodds 41, 80)
Livingston 0 Att: 5,421

Hearts 2 (Kirk 64, Stamp 79)
Kilmarnock 1 (McSwegan 90) Att: 9,881

Motherwell 0
Hibernian 1 (Riordan 90) Att: 4,533

Partick 0
Aberdeen 3 (Anderson 42, 49, Clark 90) Att: 5,186

Sunday, December 14

Dunfermline 2 (Crawford 5, Vanoli og 85)
Rangers 0 Att: 8,592

Saturday, December 20

Aberdeen 2 (Anderson 42, Wilkie og 59)
Dundee 2 (Hutchison 45, Novo 52) Att: 10,354

Kilmarnock 0
Livingston 3 (Camacho 50, Pasquinelli 80, O'Brien 90) Att: 5,035

Rangers 2 (Arveladze 22, Burke 52)
Hearts 1 (Kirk 11) Att: 49,592

Sunday, December 21

Hibernian 1 (Riordan 63)
Dunfermline 2 (Brewster 1, 36) Att: 9,085

Motherwell 0
Celtic 2 (Hartson 3, Thompson 71) Att: 10,513

Tuesday, December 23

Dundee Utd 0
Partick 0 Att: 6,440

Saturday, December 27

Celtic 6 (Sutton 4, pen 54, Hartson 45, 60, Larsson 66, Petrov 77)
Hibernian 0 Att: 59,609

Hearts 0
Motherwell 0 Att: 10,046

Kilmarnock 0
Dundee Utd 2 (Dodds 20, McIntyre pen 82) Att: 6,062

Livingston 1 (O'Brien 90)
Aberdeen 1 (Booth 23) Att: 7,115

Partick 4 (Thomson 38, Grady pen 56, 90, A Ross 89)
Dunfermline 1 (Brewster 59) Att: 4,377

Sunday, December 28

Dundee 0
Rangers 2 (Capucho 6, Ball 35) Att: 10,948

Saturday, January 3

Aberdeen 3 (Diamond 7, Tosh 45, Hinds 60)
Kilmarnock 1 (Nish 82) Att: 11,698

Celtic 3 (Petrov 19, Varga 60, Thompson 84)
Rangers 0 Att: 59,087

Dunfermline 2 (Nicholson pen 36, Crawford 80)
Livingston 2 (McNamee 15, Makel 62) Att: 5,155

Hibernian 3 (O'Connor 9, Dobbie 35, Whittaker 84)
Partick 2 (Grady 53, Madaschi 78) Att: 8,875

Motherwell 3 (Clarkson 60, 68, 90)
Dundee Utd 1 (Wilson 15) Att: 5,549

Tuesday, January 6

Dundee 1 (McLean 80)
Hearts 2 (De Vries 47, Maybury 83) Att: 6,387

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	19	18	1	0	62	7	55
Rangers	19	14	2	3	43	18	44
Hearts	19	10	3	6	28	23	33
Dunfermline	19	8	6	5	25	27	30
Motherwell	19	6	6	7	20	22	24
Livingston	19	5	8	6	21	22	23
Hibernian	19	6	4	9	20	33	22
Dundee Utd	19	5	5	9	18	32	20
Kilmarnock	19	6	2	11	24	41	20
Aberdeen	19	5	4	10	23	34	19
Dundee	19	4	6	9	21	27	18
Partick	19	2	3	14	19	38	9

LEADING GOALSCORERS
16 Henrik Larsson (Celtic)
13 Chris Sutton (Celtic)

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

Dec 6: Napredak 0 Hajduk K 2; Kom Podgorica 3 Borac 3; Vojvodina 0 Red Star 2; Sartid 0 Zeta 0; Sutjeska 0 Radnicki O 0; Partizan 3 Buducnost 0; OFK 1 Zemun 0.
Dec 7: Obilic 0 Zeleznik 1.
Dec 13: Borac 1 Obilic 0; Buducnost 1 OFK 1; Zeta 5 Napredak 1; Hajduk K 3 Kom Podgorica 1; Radnicki O 1 Vojvodina 1; Red Star 1 Sartid 0; Zeleznik 0 Partizan 1; Zemun 2 Sutjeska 1.

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Red Star	15	12	1	2	31	6	37
Partizan	15	11	1	3	33	15	34
Sartid	15	10	2	3	31	18	32
Zeleznik	15	10	1	4	23	9	31
OFK	15	8	4	3	20	15	28
Hajduk K	15	7	3	5	15	10	24
Obilic	15	6	2	7	18	16	20
Zeta	15	5	4	6	18	20	19
Buducnost	15	6	1	8	19	27	19
Zemun	15	5	3	7	14	17	18
Sutjeska	15	5	2	8	16	18	17
Vojvodina	15	3	6	6	14	20	15
Borac	15	3	4	8	16	31	13
Radnicki O	15	1	8	6	10	21	11
Kom Podgorica	15	3	1	11	14	35	10
Napredak	15	2	3	10	14	28	9

SPAIN

Saturday, December 6

Barcelona 1 (Kluivert 83)
Real Madrid 2 (Roberto Carlos 37, Ronaldo 75) Att: 92,524

Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Capdevila 59)
Malaga 0 Att: 23,000

Osasuna 3 (Aloisi 28, 49, Bakayoko 74)
Celta Vigo 2 (Jose Ignacio 37, Catanha 90) Att: 14,814

Real Sociedad 0
Betis 4 (Capi 4, Joaquin 15, 58, Juanito 49) Att: 25,063

Sunday, December 7

Albacete 4 (Aranda pen 40, Pacheco 59, Delporte 72, Juanma og 87)
Racing Santander 0 Att: 15,000

Atletico Madrid 2 (Fernando Torres 21, pen 74)
Espanyol 0 Att: 40,000

Mallorca 1 (Correa 15)
Valladolid 0 Att: 12,000

Murcia 1 (Karanka 12)
Villarreal 1 (Xisco Nadal 90) Att: 16,600

Sevilla 3 (Podesta 33, 47, Antonio 71)
Zaragoza 2 (David og 22, Villa pen 29) Att: 30,000

Valencia 2 (Vicente 17, 65)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Ezquerro 52) Att: 51,000

Saturday, December 13

Celta Vigo 2 (Luccin 37, Milosevic 40)
Atletico Madrid 2 (Simeone 17, Lequi 82) Att: 17,000

Espanyol 1 (Cruyff 8)
Barcelona 3 (Ronaldinho 10, Kluivert 21, 35) Att: 30,000

Villarreal 2 (Riquelme 12, Anderson 33)
Real Sociedad 0 Att: 11,760

Sunday, December 14

Athletic Bilbao 2 (Urzaiz 7, Yeste 24)
Sevilla 1 (Julio Baptista 1) Att: 25,000

Betis 0
Valencia 1 (Juanito og 17) Att: 42,000

Malaga 3 (Fernando Sanz 11, Duda 71, Salva pen 90)
Mallorca 1 (Eto'o 30) Att: 21,000

Racing Santander 0
Osasuna 0 Att: 12,109

Real Madrid 2 (Ronaldo 44, Raul 85)
Deportivo La Coruna 1 (Pandiani 62) Att: 78,000

Valladolid 0
Murcia 0 Att: 11,500

Zaragoza 0
Albacete 1 (Mikel 77) Att: 28,000

Saturday, December 20

Atletico Madrid 2 (Paunovic 63, Musampa 70)
Racing Santander 2 (Matabuena 53, Jonathan 80) Att: 50,000

Real Sociedad 1 (Nihat 6)
Valladolid 3 (Makukula 29, Losada 73, Oscar 85) Att: 24,297

Valencia 1 (Mista 60)
Sevilla 0 Att: 40,000

Sunday, December 21

Albacete 1 (Aranda 13)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Ezquerro 40) Att: 17,300

Barcelona 1 (Cocu 70)
Celta Vigo 1 (Jesuli 17) Att: 47,863

Betis 1 (Juanito 80)
Villarreal 3 (Anderson 74, Guayre 88, 90) Att: 35,000

Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Luque 45, Torricelli og 65)
Espanyol 1 (Cruyff 17) Att: 22,000

Mallorca 1 (Correa 11)
Real Madrid 3 (Raul 45, Ronaldo 55, Figo pen 68) Att: 25,000

Murcia 1 (Karanka 22)
Malaga 2 (Insua 16, Canabal 90) Att: 10,000

Osasuna 0
Zaragoza 1 (Villa pen 35) Att: 16,115

Saturday, January 3

Celta Vigo 0
Deportivo La Coruna 5 (Luque 15, Victor 42, 71, 79, Diego Tristan 87) Att: 24,000

Real Madrid 1 (Raul 8)
Murcia 0 Att: 66,012

Zaragoza 0
Atletico Madrid 0

Sunday, January 4

Athletic Bilbao 1 (Del Horno 44)
Osasuna 1 (Izquierdo 35) Att: 38,000

Espanyol 2 (Tamudo 22, 74)
Mallorca 0 Att: 22,200

Malaga 1 (Litos 25)
Real Sociedad 2 (Karpin 36, Nihat 45) Att: 22,000

Racing Santander 3 (Juanma 51, Regueiro 80, Javi Guerrero 84)
Barcelona 0 Att: 16,512

Sevilla 2 (Baptista 39, Antonito 90)
Albacete 0 Att: 40,000

Valencia 4 (Baraja 56, 72, Almar 57, Mista 87)
Villarreal 2 (Riquelme 14, Belletti 78) Att: 47,000

Valladolid 0
Betis 0 Att: 13,000

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	18	13	3	2	37	18	42
Valencia	18	12	4	2	35	14	40
Dep La Coruna	18	11	3	4	31	14	36
Osasuna	18	7	7	4	19	14	28
Atletico Madrid	18	8	4	6	23	22	28
Villarreal	18	7	6	5	22	21	27
Malaga	18	8	2	8	24	22	26
Athletic Bilbao	18	7	5	6	23	21	26
Valladolid	18	6	7	5	22	23	25
Racing Santander	18	7	4	7	23	25	25
Sevilla	18	6	6	6	26	21	24
Barcelona	18	6	6	6	23	25	24
Mallorca	18	7	2	9	21	30	23
Albacete	18	6	2	10	21	24	20
Zaragoza	18	5	5	8	18	21	20
Betis	18	4	7	7	21	22	19
Real Sociedad	18	4	6	8	18	29	18
Celta Vigo	18	3	8	7	22	30	17
Murcia	18	1	9	8	15	29	12
Espanyol	18	3	2	13	14	33	11

LEADING GOALSCORERS
14 Ronaldo (Real Madrid)
10 Mista (Valencia)
9 Fernando Torres (Atletico Madrid)
9 Raul (Real Madrid)
9 Salva (Malaga)

TURKEY

Dec 5: Besiktas 2 Adanaspor 1.
Dec 6: Samsunspor 1 Sebatspor 1; Istanbulspor 3 Galatasaray 1; Trabzonspor 3 Gaziantepspor 0; Diyarbakirspor 2 Elazigspor 0.
Dec 7: Rizespor 1 Bursaspor 0; Malatyaspor 1 Genclerbirligi 1; Denizlispor 3 Konyaspor 2; Ankaragucu 1 Fenerbahce 4.
Dec 13: Genclerbirligi 1 Istanbulspor 0; Gaziantepspor 3 Elazigspor 1; Sebatspor 1 Besiktas 2; Fenerbahce 2 Denizlispor 0.
Dec 14: Adanaspor 1 Ankaragucu 3; Bursaspor 0 Diyarbakirspor 0; Rizespor 1 Samsunspor 2; Konyaspor 3 Malatyaspor 3; Galatasaray 1 Trabzonspor 2.
Dec 20: Elazigspor 2 Galatasaray 2; Trabzonspor 1 Genclerbirligi 3; Besiktas 5 Rizespor 3.
Dec 21: Samsunspor 0 Bursaspor 0; Malatyaspor 2 Fenerbahce 2; Istanbulspor 2 Konyaspor 3; Denizlispor 1 Adanaspor 1; Ankaragucu 1 Sebatspor 1; Diyarbakirspor 2 Gaziantepspor 1.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Besiktas	17	13	4	0	42	15	43
Trabzonspor	17	10	4	3	29	19	34
Fenerbahce	16	9	5	2	36	21	32
Denizlispor	17	9	3	5	31	20	30
Galatasaray	17	8	5	4	27	23	29
Malatyaspor	17	7	6	4	27	19	27
Genclerbirligi	17	8	2	7	31	20	26
Gaziantepspor	17	8	2	7	23	22	26
Diyarbakirspor	17	7	4	6	25	22	25
Samsunspor	17	6	5	6	25	28	23
Istanbulspor	17	6	3	8	27	25	21
Ankaragucu	17	5	4	8	22	30	19
Konyaspor	17	3	9	5	23	29	18
Rizespor	16	4	3	9	14	26	15
Sebatspor	17	3	5	9	18	28	14
Bursaspor	17	2	7	8	14	22	13
Adanaspor	17	3	2	12	15	37	11
Elazigspor	17	2	5	10	19	42	11

SOUTH AMERICA

LIBERTADORES CUP

SCHEDULE

Group 1

Feb 5: Sao Caetano (Bra) v The Strongest (Bol)
Feb 11: Mexico 2nd qualifiers v Penarol (Uru)
Feb 19: The Strongest v Mexico 2nd qualifiers
Mar 2: Penarol v Sao Caetano
Mar 11: Sao Caetano v Mexico 2nd qualifiers
Mar 16: Penarol v The Strongest
Mar 17: Mexico 2nd qualifiers v Sao Caetano
Mar 23: The Strongest v Penarol
Apr 8: Sao Caetano v Penarol
Apr 8: Mexico 2nd qualifiers v The Strongest
Apr 15: The Strongest v Sao Caetano
Apr 15: Penarol v Mexico 2nd qualifiers

Group 2

Feb 10: Velez Sarsfield (Arg) v Maracaibo (Ven)
Feb 19: Once Caldas (Col) v Fenix (Uru)
Feb 25: Maracaibo v Once Caldas
Feb 25: Fenix v Velez Sarsfield
Mar 3: Fenix v Maracaibo
Mar 9: Velez Sarsfield v Once Caldas
Mar 17: Once Caldas v Velez Sarsfield
Mar 18: Maracaibo v Fenix
Apr 6: Velez Sarsfield v Fenix
Apr 6: Once Caldas v Maracaibo
Apr 22: Maracaibo v Velez Sarsfield
Apr 22: Fenix v Once Caldas

Group 3

Feb 3: Mexico 1st qualifiers v U de Concepcion (Chl)
Feb 4: Cruzeiro (Bra) v Caracas (Ven)
Feb 10: U de Concepción v Cruzeiro
Feb 12: Caracas v Mexico 1st qualifiers
Feb 17: Cruzeiro v Mexico 1st qualifiers
Feb 24: U de Concepcion v Caracas
Mar 2: Caracas v U de Concepcion
Mar 10: Mexico 1st qualifiers v Cruzeiro
Mar 16: Mexico 1st qualifiers v Caracas
Mar 17: Cruzeiro v U de Concepcion
Apr 15: Caracas v Cruzeiro
Apr 15: U de Concepcion v Mexico 1st qualifiers

Group 4

Feb 10: Cobreloa (Chl) v LDU Quito (Ecu)
Feb 11: Alianza Lima (Per) v Sao Paulo (Bra)
Feb 25: LDU Quito v Alianza Lima
Feb 26: Sao Paulo v Cobreloa
Mar 4: LDU Quito v Sao Paulo
Mar 4: Alianza Lima v Cobreloa
Mar 10: Cobreloa v Alianza Lima
Mar 10: Sao Paulo v LDU Quito
Mar 24: Cobreloa v Sao Paulo
Mar 25: Alianza Lima v LDU Quito
Apr 7: Sao Paulo v Alianza Lima
Apr 7: LDU Quito v Cobreloa

Group 5

Feb 12: El Nacional (Ecu) v Nacional (Uru)
Feb 12: Independiente (Arg) v Peru 3rd qualifiers
Feb 24: Nacional v Independiente
Feb 26: Peru 3rd qualifiers v El Nacional
Mar 2: Independiente v El Nacional
Mar 4: Nacional v Peru 3rd qualifiers
Mar 11: Peru 3rd qualifiers v Nacional
Mar 16: El Nacional v Independiente
Mar 23: El Nacional v Peru 3rd qualifiers
Mar 25: Independiente v Nacional
Apr 20: Peru 3rd qualifiers v Independiente
Apr 20: Nacional v El Nacional

Group 6

Feb 3: Libertad (Par) v Tolima (Col)
Feb 11: Deportivo Tachira (Ven) v River Plate (Arg)
Feb 24: Tolima v Deportivo Tachira
Feb 25: River Plate v Libertad
Mar 9: Deportivo Tachira v Libertad
Mar 11: Tolima v River Plate
Mar 17: Libertad v Deportivo Tachira
Mar 18: River Plate v Tolima
Apr 7: Libertad v River Plate
Apr 8: Deportivo Tachira v Tolima

Apr 14: River Plate v Deportivo Tachira
Apr 14: Tolima v Libertad

Group 7

Feb 4: Guarani (Par) v Barcelona (Ecu)
Feb 5: Jorge Wilstermann (Bol) v Santos (Bra)
Feb 12: Barcelona v Jorge Wilstermann
Feb 18: Santos v Guarani
Mar 3: Jorge Wilstermann v Guarani
Mar 3: Barcelona v Santos
Mar 11: Santos v Barcelona
Mar 18: Guarani v Jorge Wilstermann
Mar 24: Jorge Wilstermann v Barcelona
Mar 25: Guarani v Santos
Apr 14: Santos v Jorge Wilstermann
Apr 14: Barcelona v Guarani

Group 8

Feb 3: Colo Colo (Chl) v Deportivo Cali (Col)
Feb 18: Bolivar (Bol) v Boca Juniors (Arg)
Mar 2: Deportivo Cali v Bolivar
Mar 3: Boca Juniors v Colo Colo
Mar 10: Deportivo Cali v Boca Juniors
Mar 18: Bolivar v Colo Colo
Mar 24: Boca Juniors v Deportivo Cali
Mar 25: Colo Colo v Bolivar
Apr 7: Bolivar v Deportivo Cali
Apr 8: Colo Colo v Boca Juniors
Apr 21: Boca Juniors v Bolivar
Apr 21: Deportivo Cali v Colo Colo

Group 9

Feb 5: Olimpia (Par) v Rosario Central (Arg)
Feb 10: Sporting Cristal (Per) v Coritiba (Bra)
Feb 17: Coritiba v Olimpia
Feb 26: Rosario Central v Sporting Cristal
Mar 4: Rosario Central v Coritiba
Mar 9: Sporting Cristal v Olimpia
Mar 10: Coritiba v Rosario Central
Mar 16: Olimpia v Sporting Cristal
Mar 23: Sporting Cristal v Rosario Central
Apr 6: Olimpia v Coritiba
Apr 13: Coritiba v Sporting Cristal
Apr 13: Rosario Central v Olimpia

Group winners and the five best runners-up qualify for second round; other four runners-up play off in two head-to-head ties for last two second round berths

SUDAMERICANA CUP

Final, 1st leg

Dec 10 - Estadio Monumental, Buenos Aires
River Plate (Arg) 3 (Lopez 28, 50, Salas 85)
Cienciano (Per) 3 (Portilla 26, 79, Carty 67)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Simon (Bra)
River Plate: Costanzo - Lobo, Tula, Rojas, Virviescas, Coudet (Dominguez 73), Ahumada, Gonzalez (Luduena 70), Gallardo, Montenegro (Salas 62), Lopez.
Cienciano: Ibanez - Acasiete, Llanos (C Lobaton 87), Portilla, Moran, La Rosa, Bazalar, J C Garcia, Carty, Saraz (P Maldonado 46; Ccahuantico 90), Lugo.

Final, 2nd leg

Dec 19 - Estadio Universidad de San Agustin, Arequipa
Cienciano 1 (Lugo 78)
River Plate 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Mendez (Uru)
Cienciano 4-3 on agg
Cienciano: Ibanez - Acasiete, Lugo, Portilla, Moran, Bazalar (Llanos 90), La Rosa, J C Garcia, Maldonado (Ccahuantico 58), Saraz (M R Garcia 83), Carty. *Sent off: La Rosa 52min, J C Garcia 84min.*
River Plate: Costanzo - Ahumada (Luduena 85), Ameli, Tuzzio, Rojas, Coudet, Mascherano, Gonzalez (Dominguez 76), Gallardo, Lopez, Salas (Montenegro 16).

ARGENTINA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, December 5

Independiente 2 (Comizzo og 8, Losada 57)
Atletico Rafaela 1 (Juarez 32)

Saturday, December 6

Arsenal 0
Racing Club 0

Gimnasia LP 1 (Choy 65)
Rosario Central 2 (Gonzalez 18, Campora 30)

San Lorenzo 4 (Carreno 12, Paredes 17, Santana 49, Acosta pen 75)
Velez Sarsfield 1 (Zarate 22)

Sunday, December 7

Banfield 2 (Sanguinetti 10, Gonzalez 16)
Estudiantes 1 (Aquino 44)

Colon Santa Fe 2 (Fuertes 1, Maceratesi 76)
Boca Juniors 1 (Barijho 34)

Newell's Old Boys 1 (Vasquez 11)
Nueva Chicago 1 (Carranza 44)

Olimpo 2 (Dure 48, Delorte 78)
Chacarita Juniors 0

Quilmes 2 (Gerlo 25, Lopez 57)
Lanus 1 (Diaz 10)

River Plate 1 (Ameli 72)
Talleres Cordoba 1 (Osorio 17)

Friday, December 12

Racing Club 1 (Milito pen 34)
Olimpo 2 (Mazzoni 11, Mas 36)

Velez Sarsfield 2 (Martinez 36, Zarate 74)
Gimnasia LP 2 (Solana 45, Oliveira pen 90)

Saturday, December 13

Nueva Chicago 0
Independiente 1 (Testa og 12)

Rosario Central 2 (Talamonti 7, Ferrari pen 75)
Banfield 2 (Sanchez 18, Gonzalez 23)

Sunday, December 14

Chacarita Juniors 2 (Graf 55, 69)
Colon Santa Fe 2 (Fuertes 3, Sinistierra 40)

Estudiantes 4 (Farias 1, pen 25, 39, pen 70)
Newell's Old Boys 2 (Vasquez 13, 80)

Lanus 0
Arsenal 1 (Esmerado 82)

Talleres Cordoba 0
Quilmes 0

ARGENTINA - OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Boca Juniors	19	11	6	2	31	11	39
San Lorenzo	19	11	3	5	26	13	36
Banfield	19	9	5	5	27	18	32
Quilmes	19	8	7	4	20	13	31
Rosario Central	19	8	7	4	28	26	31
Newell's OB	19	7	8	4	27	20	29
Arsenal	19	6	8	5	18	16	26
Colon Santa Fe	19	5	9	5	23	24	24
Talleres Cordoba	19	6	6	7	27	30	24
Racing Club	18	4	10	4	22	20	22
Estudiantes	18	6	4	8	18	19	22
Lanus	19	4	10	5	21	23	22
Independiente	19	5	7	7	15	19	22
Velez Sarsfield	19	5	7	7	19	28	22
Chacarita Jnrs*	19	5	9	5	20	19	21
Gimnasia LP	19	5	6	8	14	22	21
River Plate	17	5	5	7	18	22	20
Olimpo	19	5	5	9	17	23	20
Atletico Rafaela	17	3	7	7	18	26	16
Nueva Chicago	19	2	5	12	14	31	11

**3pts deducted for crowd violence*

LEADING GOALSCORERS
13 Ernesto Farias (Estudiantes)
10 Alberto Acosta (San Lorenzo)
10 Julian Vasquez (Newell's Old Boys)
9 Fernando Cavenaghi (River Plate)

BOLIVIA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Final group

Dec 3: Bolivar 2 Jorge Wilstermann 1.
Dec 4: Aurora 1 The Strongest 2.
Dec 7: Bolivar 1 The Strongest 0; Jorge Wilstermann 3 Aurora 0.
Dec 10: The Strongest 4 Jorge Wilstermann 0.
Dec 11: Aurora 2 Bolivar 4;
Dec 14: The Strongest 1 Bolivar 0; Aurora 0 Jorge Wilstermann 3.
Dec 17: Jorge Wilstermann 1 The Strongest 1.
Dec 18: Bolivar 2 Aurora 3.
Dec 21: Jorge Wilstermann 2 Bolivar 1; The Strongest 2 Aurora 1.

CLOSING - FINAL GROUP - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
The Strongest	6	4	1	1	10	4	13
J Wilstermann	6	3	1	2	10	8	10
Bolivar	6	3	0	3	10	9	9
Aurora	6	1	0	5	7	16	3

BRAZIL

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Dec 6: Goias 0 Figueirense 3; Vitoria 0 Atletico Mineiro 1; Atletico Paranaense 2 Vasco da Gama 2; Corinthians 1 Parana 1.
Dec 7: Guarani 2 Paysandu 1; Cruzeiro 5 Fluminense 2; Fortaleza 2 Coritiba 2; Internacional 1 Sao Paulo 1; Flamengo 1 Ponte Preta 1; Criciuma 3 Bahia 2; Santos 2 Gremio 2; Juventude 2 Sao Caetano 1.
Dec 13: Figueirense 2 Guarani 0; Parana 2 Vitoria 0; Sao Caetano 5 Internacional 0; Coritiba 2 Criciuma 0; Atletico Mineiro 3 Goias 2.
Dec 14: Sao Paulo 1 Flamengo 3; Vasco da Gama 1 Santos 1; Fluminense 1 Juventude 0; Gremio 3 Corinthians 0; Paysandu 2 Atletico Paranaense 2; Ponte Preta 2 Fortaleza 0; Bahia 0 Cruzeiro 7.

BRAZIL - NATIONAL - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruzeiro	46	31	7	8	102	47	100
Santos	46	25	12	9	93	60	87
Sao Paulo	46	22	12	12	81	67	78
Sao Caetano**	46	19	14	13	53	37	74
Coritiba	46	21	10	15	67	58	73
Internacional*	46	20	10	16	59	57	72
At Mineiro	46	19	15	12	76	62	72
Flamengo	46	18	12	16	66	73	66
Goias	46	18	11	17	78	63	65
Parana	46	18	11	17	85	75	65
Figueirense	46	17	14	15	62	54	65
At Paranaense	46	17	10	19	67	72	61
Guarani	46	17	10	19	64	72	61
Criciuma	46	17	9	20	57	69	60
Corinthians**	46	15	12	19	61	63	59
Vitoria	46	15	11	20	50	64	56
Vasco da Gama	46	13	15	18	57	69	54
Juventude*	46	12	14	20	55	70	53
Fluminense**	46	13	11	22	52	77	52
Gremio	46	13	11	22	54	68	50
Ponte Preta*/**	46	11	18	17	63	73	50
Paysandu**	46	15	12	19	74	77	49
Fortaleza	46	12	13	21	58	74	49
Bahia	46	12	10	24	59	92	46

**Ponte Preta were docked the 4pts gained from the 1-1 draw with Internacional and the 1-0 win over Juventude for fielding an ineligible player in each game; Internacional were awarded two extra points (ie the equivalent of a win), and Juventude received three points.*
***Paysandu were docked the 8pts gained from the 2-2 draw with Corinthians, the 3-2 win over Ponte Preta, the 1-0 win over Sao Caetano and the 1-1 draw with Fluminense for fielding ineligible players in each game; Corinthians and Fluminense were awarded two extra points (ie the equivalent of a win), and Ponte Preta and Sao Caetano received three points.*
In both cases the won-drawn-lost and goals records were not altered.

CHILE

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Best of two legs; aggregate score irrelevant. If level at one game each, 2nd leg went to extra-time – team scoring golden goal qualified

Quarter-finals

1st legs
Dec 3: Cobreloa 4 Union Espanola 1; Cobresal 2 U de Concepcion 1.
Dec 4: U Catolica 1 Colo Colo 2; Palestino 1 Santiago Wanderers 1.

2nd legs
Dec 6: Union Espanola 2 Cobreloa 4; U de Concepcion 5 Cobresal 2 (aet; Cobresal on golden goal); Colo Colo 0 U Catolica 0; Santiago Wanderers 1 Palestino 1 (aet; Wanderers 4-2 on pens).

Semi-finals

1st legs
Dec 10: Cobresal 1 Colo Colo 1.
Dec 11: Cobreloa 2 Santiago Wanderers 0.

2nd legs
Dec 13: Colo Colo 2 Cobresal 0.
Dec 14: Santiago Wanderers 0 Cobreloa 0.

Final

1st leg - Dec 17 - Municipal stadium, Calama
Cobreloa 2 (Jaime Gonzalez 52, Cornejo pen 80)
Colo Colo 2 (Espina 75, Henriquez 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 7,633. **Ref:** Chandia

2nd leg - Dec 21 - Monumental stadium, Santiago
Colo Colo 1 (Fernandez 81)
Cobreloa 2 (Fuentes 41, Jaime Gonzalez 70)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Selman

Cobreloa win closing championship

COLOMBIA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Play-offs

Dec 6: At Junior 3 Tolima 2; At Nacional 4 Indep Medellin 2.
Dec 7: Millonarios 2 Dep Cali 3; Dep Pasto 2 Magdalena 2.
Dec 14: Dep Cali 3 Dep Pasto 1; Magdalena 2 Millonarios 1; Tolima 2 At Nacional 0; Indep Medellin 1 At Junior 0.

PLAY-OFFS - GROUP A - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dep Cali	6	3	3	0	10	6	12
Millonarios	6	3	1	2	9	7	10
Magdalena	6	2	3	1	7	6	9
Dep Pasto	6	0	1	5	4	11	1

PLAY-OFFS - GROUP B - FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tolima*	6	3	1	2	8	7	10
At Junior*	6	3	1	2	8	7	10
At Nacional	6	3	0	3	8	8	9
Indep Medellin	6	2	0	4	8	10	6

Group winners qualified for play-off Final
**Tolima topped group on away goals scored during play-offs*

Final

1st leg - Dec 17
Tolima 2 (Pereira 51, 83)
Dep Cali 0
HT: 0-0

2nd leg - Dec 21
Dep Cali 3 (Diaz 15, Preciado 20, Murillo 39)
Tolima 1 (Bedoya og 34)
HT: 3-1

One leg each. Tolima 4-2 on pens

ECUADOR

OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFFS

Dec 5: Dep Cuenca 4 Emelec 1.
Dec 6: Barcelona 0 El Nacional 2.
Dec 7: Dep Quito 1 LDU Quito 0.
Dec 10: El Nacional 4 Dep Quito 0; LDU Quito 5 Dep Cuenca 0; Barcelona 3 Emelec 0.
Dec 14: LDU Quito 2 El Nacional 1; Dep Cuenca 1 Barcelona 4; Emelec 0 Dep Quito 0.
Dec 21: Dep Quito 6 Dep Cuenca 2; El Nacional 5 Emelec 2; Barcelona 4 LDU Quito 0.

OVERALL C'SHIP PLAY-OFFS – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
LDU Quito	10	7	0	3	19	13	26 [5]
Barcelona	10	6	0	4	19	9	23 [5]
El Nacional	10	6	0	4	21	13	20 [2]
Emelec	10	3	2	5	12	21	11
Dep Quito	10	3	1	6	11	19	10
Dep Cuenca	10	3	1	6	17	26	10

Bonus points from opening and closing championships in brackets

URUGUAY

OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIP PLAY-OFF

Dec 4 - Centenario stadium, Montevideo
Penarol 1 (Bizera 45)
Nacional 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 40,000. **Ref:** Mendez
Sent off: Rotundo (Penarol) 49min; Benoit 10min, Mello 82min, Morales 90min (all Nacional)

VENEZUELA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Dec 7: Trujillanos 0 Ital-Chacao 0; Caracas 2 Dep Tachira 0; Estudiantes 2 Monagas 3; Mineros Guayana 4 El Vigia 1; Carabobo 1 Maracaibo 0.
Dec 10: Ital-Chacao 0 Maracaibo 1; El Vigia 1 Carabobo 0; Monagas 1 Mineros Guayana 1; Dep Tachira 2 Estudiantes 1; Trujillanos 1 Caracas 0.
Dec 13: Carabobo 1 Monagas 1.
Dec 14: Caracas 3 Ital-Chacao 1; Estudiantes 0 Trujillanos 1; Mineros Guayana 1 Dep Tachira 0; Maracaibo 5 El Vigia 0.

VENEZUELA – OPENING – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Caracas	18	10	6	2	34	15	36
Dep Tachira	18	10	6	2	26	16	36
Mineros Guayana	18	11	3	4	23	14	36
Maracaibo	18	6	5	7	16	12	23
Ital-Chacao	18	6	5	7	22	23	23
Trujillanos	18	5	5	8	14	18	20
El Vigia	18	4	7	7	18	28	19
Carabobo	18	4	6	8	21	26	18
Monagas	18	4	6	8	17	27	18
Estudiantes	18	4	3	11	14	26	15

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

MEXICO

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Quarter-finals

1st legs
Dec 3: Cruz Azul 0 Tigres 1; Toluca 2 Pumas UNAM 2.
Dec 4: Atlante 3 Santos 1; Necaxa 1 Pachuca 3.

2nd legs
Dec 6: Tigres 1 Cruz Azul 2 *Agg 2-2. Tigres on better season record*; Pumas UNAM 0 Toluca 2 *Toluca 4-2 on agg.*
Dec 7: Pachuca 1 Necaxa 2 *Pachuca 4-3 on agg*; Santos 2 Atlante 2 *Atlante 5-3 on agg.*

Semi-finals

1st legs
Dec 10: Toluca 1 Tigres 0.
Dec 11: Atlante 0 Pachuca 0.

2nd legs
Dec 13: Tigres 2 Toluca 0 *Tigres 2-1 on agg.*
Dec 14: Pachuca 2 Atlante 1 *Pachuca 2-1 on agg.*

Final

1st leg - Dec 17 - Estadio Hidalgo, Pachuca
Pachuca 3 (Sanchez og 23, Bautista 77, Gabriel de Anda pen 86)
Tigres 1 (Soares 59)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 30,000 **Ref:** Alcala

2nd leg - Dec 20 - Estadio Universitario, Monterrey
Tigres 1 (Silvera 90)
Pachuca 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Rodriguez
Sent off: Sancho 64min, Rergis 74min, Soares 84 min (all Tigres); Huiqui (Pachuca) 81min
Pachuca 3-2 on agg

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Final, 2nd leg

Dec 12 - Ismailia
Ismaili (Egy) 1 (Abd Rabbou pen 27)
Enyimba (Nig) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Maillet (Sey)
Enyimba 2-1 on agg
Ismaili: Sobhi - Al-Nahhas, El-Shater, Salem (Abdallah 77), Fahim (Ibrahim 89), Moawad, Fathi, Hommous (Dioubate 63), Abd Rabbou, Abougreisha, Traore.
Enyimba: Enyeama - Nwaneri, Omolade, Okpara, Ogunsanya, Mohammed, Musa, Ogunbiyi (Garba 57), Ezenwa (Anumnu 90), Okonkwo, Ochei (Nwanna 79).

2004 EDITION – DRAW

1st rnd

Stade Tamponnaise (Reu) v AS Port Louis 2000 (Mrs)
SuperSport United (SAf) v Civics (Nam)
St George (Eth) v Al Hilal (Sud)
Eco Redipharm Toamasina (Mad) v St Michel United (Sey)
Matlama (Les) v Orlando Pirates (SAf)
Simba SC (Tan) v Zanaco (Zam)
Bakili Bullets (Mwi) v SC Villa (Uga)
APR FC (Rwa) v Anseba SC (Eri)
Dragons l'Oueme (Ben) v AS Douanes (Tog)
Al Ittihad (Lby) v Sahel SC (Ngr)
St Michel Oueneze (Con) v US Bitam (Gab)
ASFA Yennenga (BuF) v Julius Berger (Nig)
Asante Kotoko (Gha) v AS Tempete Mocaf (CAR)
Armed Forces (Gam) v Jeanne d'Arc (Sen)
AS Vita Club (DRC) v Ulinzi Stars (Ken)
Stade Malien (Mli) v Hearts of Oak (Gha)
AS Aviacao (Ang) v SC Cimenterie Lukala (DRC)
Hassania Agadir (Mor) v ASC NASR Sebkha (Mra)
ASFAG (Gui) v Diaraf Dakar (Sen)
AmaZulu (Zim) v Maxaquene (Moz)
Petro Atletico (Ang) v Atletico Malabo (EqG)
1st legs, March 5-7; 2nd legs, March 19-21

2nd rnd

Stade Tamponnaise/AS Port Louis 2000 v SuperSport United/Civics
Al Ahly (Egy) v St George/Al Hilal
Eco Redipharm Toamasina/St Michel United v Matlama/Orlando Pirates
Simba SC/Zanaco v Bakili Bullets/SC Villa
Zamalek (Egy) v APR FC/Anseba SC
Africa Sports (IvC) v Dragons l'Oueme/AS Douanes
Esperance (Tun) v Al Ittihad/Sahel SC
Cotonsport (Cam) v St Michel Oueneze/US Bitam
USM Alger (Alg) v ASFA Yennenga/Julius Berger
ASEC Abidjan (IvC) v Asante Kotoko/AS Tempete Mocaf
Raja Casablanca (Mor) v Armed Forces/Jeanne d'Arc
Canon Yaounde (Cam) v AS Vita Club/Ulinzi Stars
Stade Malien/Hearts of Oak v AS Aviacao/SC Cimenterie Lukala
Etoile Sahel (Tun) v Hassania Agadir/ASC NASR Sebkha
Enyimba (Nig) v ASFAG/Diaraf Dakar
AmaZulu/Maxaquene v Petro Atletico/Atletico Malabo
1st legs, April 9-11; 2nd legs, April 23-25

The World Next Month

The most important games over the next four weeks

Sat, January 17
Senegal v South Africa (friendly, Dakar)
Dutch Antilles v Surinam (friendly, Willemstad)

Sun, January 18
Zimbabwe v Kenya (friendly, Harare)
United States v Denmark (friendly, Los Angeles)
Egypt v Burkina Faso (friendly, Port Said)
Barbados v Canada (friendly, Bridgetown)

Thu, January 22
Sweden v Norway (Carlsberg Cup, Hong Kong)

Sat, January 24
African Nations Cup kicks off – Tunisia v Rwanda, Gp A (Rades, Tunis)
Guatemala v Denmark (friendly, Los Angeles)

Wed, January 28
Panama v El Salvador (friendly, Panama City)

Sat, January 31
Grenada v Barbados (friendly, St George's)

Tue, February 3
China v Finland (friendly, Zheijang)
Libertadores Cup (start of group phase)

Sat, February 7
China v Finland (friendly, Zheijang)
Antigua & Barbuda v Barbados (friendly, St John's)
African Nations Cup quarter-finals 1 & 2 (Tunis)

Sun, February 8
African Nations Cup quarter-finals 3 & 4 (Monastir & Sfax)

Wed, February 11
African Nations Cup semi-finals (Tunis & Sousse)

CUP-WINNERS CUP

Final, 2nd leg

Dec 6 - Sousse
Etoile Sahel (Tun) 3 (Obiakor 2, 60, 87)
Julius Berger (Nig) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 28,000
Etoile Sahel 3-2 on agg

AFRICAN CONFEDERATION CUP

DRAW

1st rnd

Stade Tunisien (Tun) v ASC Thies (Sen)
Olympic Real Bangui (CAR) v Petro Huambo (Ang)
Saint Louis (Sey) v Leopards Transfoot (Mad)
Ferroviario (Moz) v Wits University (SAf)
Kiyovu Sports (Rwa) v US Mbila Nzami (Gab)
Chemelil Sugar (Ken) v Mtibwa Sugar (Tan)
Savanne SC (Mrs) v Dynamos (Zim)
Al Merreikh (Sud) v Power Dynamos (Zam)
Express FC (Uga) v Coffee FC (Eth)
Diables Noirs (Con) v Deportivo Mongomo (EqG)
Etoile Filante (BuF) v Dynamic Togolais Lome (Tog)
Mogas '90 (Ben) v ANASSR (Lby)
ASC Entente (Mra) v CS Etoile Guinea (Gui)
Djoliba (Mli) v Wallidan (Gam)
Omnisport Bouafle (IvC) v Olympic FC (Ngr)
1st legs, March 5-7; 2nd legs, March 19-21

2nd rnd

InterClube (Ang) v AS Douanes (Sen)
PWD Bamenda (Cam) v TP Mazembe Englebert (DRC)
Ismaili (Egy) v Stade Tunisien/ASC Thies
Real Bangui/Petro Huambo v Liberty Pros (Gha)
Saint Louis/Leopards Transfoot v Ferroviario/Wits Univ.
Kiyovu Sports/US Mbila Nzami v Sable Batie (Cam)
Chemelil Sugar/Mtibwa Sugar v Santos (SAf)
Savanne SC/Dynamos v King Faisal Babies (Gha)
Al Merreikh/Power Dynamos v DC Motema Pembe (DRC)
Express FC/Coffee FC v Lobi Stars (Nig)
Diables Noirs/Dep. Mongomo v Stella Abidjan (IvC)
Etoile Filante/Dynamic Togolais v Wydad Casablanca (Mor)
Mogas '90/ANASSR v Enugu Rangers (Nig)
Entente/Etoile Guinea v Chabab Belouizdad (Alg)
Djoliba/Wallidan v Club Africain (Tun)
Royal Armed Forces (Mor) v Omnisport Bouafle/Olympic FC
1st legs, April 9-11; 2nd legs, April 23-25

ASIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

DRAW

Group A: Zob-Ahan (Irn), Al Riffa (Bhn), Qatar Sports Club (Qat), Pakhtakor (Uzb).
Group B: Al Wahda (UAE), Al Qadisiya (Kuw), Air Force (Irq), Al Sadd (Qat).
Group C: Al Sharjah (UAE), Al Hilal (Sau), Al Ahli (Bhn) Police (Irq).
Group D: Sepahan (Irn), Al Arabi (Kuw), Al Ittihad (Sau), Neftchi (Uzb).
Group E: Chonbuk Motors (SKo), Shanghai Shenhua (Chn), BEC Tero Sasana (Tha), Jubilo Iwata (Jap).
Group F: Hoang Anh Gia Lai (Vie), Dalian Shide (Chn), Krung Thai Bank (Tha), PSM Makassar (Ins).
Group G: Binh Dinh (Vie), Songnam Ilhwa Chunma (SKo), Persik Kediri (Ins), Yokohama F Marinos (Jap).
Group winners qualify for quarter-finals
Bye: Al Ain (UAE; holders)
Group matchdays: Feb 11, Feb 25, Apr 7, Apr 21, May 5, May 19

AFC CUP

DRAW

Group A: Nejmeh (Leb), Muktijoddah (Ban), Nisa (Tkm), Al Sha'ab Ibb (Yem).
Group B: Mahindra United (Ind), Al Wahda Sanaa (Yem), Al Wahda (Syr), Dhofar (Oma).
Group C: Olympic Beirut (Leb), Mohammedan (Ban), Nebitchi (Tkm), Al Jaish (Syr).
Group D: Perak (Mly), Happy Valley (HK), Home United (Sin), Valencia (Mdv).
Group E: Negri Sembilan (Mly), East Bengal (Ind), Geylang United (Sin), Island FC (Mdv).
Group winners and the three best runners-up qualify for quarter-finals. Group games start Feb 11

FIFA WORLD PLAYER 2003

FIFA invited every national coach to vote for their World Player of the Year, plus a second and third choice; 142 responded. First choices were awarded five points each, runners-up three points and third places one point.

	PLAYER	1st pl	x5pts	2nd pl	x3pts	3rd pl	x1pt	Total pts
1	Zinedine Zidane	35	175	27	81	8	8	264
2	Thierry Henry	21	105	22	66	15	15	186
3	Ronaldo	26	130	11	33	13	13	176
4	Pavel Nedved	14	70	25	75	13	13	158
5	Roberto Carlos	14	70	9	27	8	8	105
6	Ruud Van Nistelrooy	4	20	17	51	15	15	86
7	David Beckham	8	40	7	21	13	13	74
8	Raul	4	20	3	9	10	10	39
9	Paolo Maldini	5	25	3	9	3	3	37
10	Andrii Shevchenko	2	10	3	9	7	7	26
11	Luis Figo	2	10	1	3	4	4	17
12	Michael Ballack	2	10	1	3	2	2	15
13	Oliver Kahn	1	5	2	6	2	2	13
14	Pablo Aimar	1	5	1	3	1	1	9
15	Gianluigi Buffon	1	5	1	3	0	0	8
16	Michael Owen	1	5	0	0	1	1	6
	Filippo Inzaghi	0	0	1	3	3	3	6
18	Fernando Morientes	1	5	0	0	0	0	5
	Alessandro Nesta	0	0	1	3	2	2	5
20	Cafu	0	0	1	3	0	0	3
	Fabio Cannavaro	0	0	1	3	0	0	3
	Paul Freier	0	0	1	3	0	0	3
	Henrik Larsson	0	0	1	3	0	0	3
	Robert Pires	0	0	1	3	0	0	3
	Dado Prso	0	0	1	3	0	0	3
	Rivaldo	0	0	1	3	0	0	3
	Ronaldinho	0	0	0	0	3	3	3
28	Samuel Eto'o	0	0	0	0	2	2	2
	Paul Scholes	0	0	0	0	2	2	2
30	Alex (Cruzeiro)	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Iker Casillas	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Alessandro Del Piero	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Marcel Desailly	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Dida	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Brad Friedel	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Gennaro Gattuso	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Ahmed Hassan	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Roy Makaay	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Claude Makelele	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Rafael Marquez	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Esala Masi	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Javier Saviola	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Daiki Takamatsu	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Rafael Van der Vaart	0	0	0	0	1	1	1

HOW THE COACHES VOTED

COUNTRY	COACH	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Albania	Hans-Peter Briegel	Maldini	Shevchenko	Raul
Algeria	Charef Boualem	Zidane	Nedved	F Inzaghi
American Samoa	David Brand	Zidane	Van Nistelrooy	Beckham
Andorra	David Rodrigo	Zidane	Nedved	Ronaldo
Angola	L. Oliveira Goncalves	Ronaldo	Beckham	Eto'o
Argentina	Marcelo Bielsa	Henry	Nedved	Raul
Armenia	Mihai Stoichita	Roberto Carlos	Zidane	Shevchenko
Aruba	Marcelo Munoz	Nedved	Shevchenko	Van Nistelrooy
Australia	Frank Farina	Henry	Van Nistelrooy	Nedved
Austria	Hans Krankl	Van Nistelrooy	F Inzaghi	Nedved
Azerbaijan	Asger Abdullayev	Beckham	Cannavaro	Makaay
Bahamas	Gary White	Henry	Raul	Friedel
Bahrain	Srecko Juricic	Nedved	Nesta	Van Nistelrooy
Bangladesh	S. M. Ghulam Sarwar Mustafa	Roberto Carlos	Henry	Ronaldo
Barbados	Kenville Layne	Henry	Roberto Carlos	Ronaldo
Belarus	Anatoly Baidachny	Roberto Carlos	Nedved	Shevchenko
Belgium	Aime Anthuenis	Van Nistelrooy	Ronaldo	Maldini
Belize	Wilfred Levy Mccalla	Henry	Ronaldo	Casillas
Bermuda	Kenny Thompson	Henry	Roberto Carlos	Shevchenko
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Blaz Sliskovic	Zidane	Van Nistelrooy	Nedved
Botswana	Vesselin Jelusic	Ronaldo	Zidane	Van Nistelrooy
Brazil	Carlos Alberto Parreira	Van Nistelrooy	Nedved	Zidane
British Virgin Islands	Peterson Arille	Ronaldo	Beckham	Figo
Bulgaria	Plamen Markov	Zidane	Maldini	Raul
Burkina Faso	Jean Paul Rabier	Zidane	Nedved	Beckham
Cameroon	Robert Cafou	Henry	Roberto Carlos	Zidane
Canada	Colin Miller	Zidane	Van Nistelrooy	Scholes
Cape Verde Islands	Alexandre Alhinho	Kahn	Zidane	Henry
Cayman Islands	Marcos Aurelio Tinoco	Ronaldo	Roberto Carlos	Alex (Cruzeiro)
Chile	Juvenal Olmos	Ronaldo	Zidane	Aimar
China	Arie Haan	Zidane	Beckham	Nesta
Colombia	Francisco Maturana	Roberto Carlos	Henry	Ronaldo
Congo	Minga-Tchibinda Noel	Henry	Ronaldo	Zidane
Cook Islands	Maurice Tillotson (tech. dir.)	Henry	Nedved	Van Nistelrooy
Costa Rica	Steve Sampson	Ronaldo	Zidane	Beckham
Croatia	Otto Baric	Henry	Maldini	Raul
Cyprus	Momcilo Vukotic	Maldini	Nedved	Van Nistelrooy
Czech Republic	Karel Bruckner	Beckham	Ronaldo	Henry
Denmark	Morten Olsen	Zidane	Roberto Carlos	Nedved
Djibouti	Hasan Mohamed Kamil	Roberto Carlos	Van Nistelrooy	F Inzaghi
Ecuador	Hernan Dario Gomez	Roberto Carlos	Henry	Ronaldo
England	Sven Goran Eriksson	Roberto Carlos	Van Nistelrooy	Ballack
Equatorial Guinea	Pedro Mabale Fuga	Ronaldo	Zidane	Ronaldinho
Eritrea	Negash Teklit Negassi	Ronaldo	Zidane	Ballack
Estonia	Arno Pijpers	Nedved	Zidane	Van Nistelrooy
Faroe Islands	Henrik Larsen	Zidane	Maldini	Roberto Carlos
Fiji	Tony Buesnel	Beckham	Henry	Ronaldo
Finland	Antti Muurinen	Zidane	Van Nistelrooy	Nesta
France	Jacques Santini	Maldini	Roberto Carlos	Raul

THE FULL VOTE RESULTS

COUNTRY	COACH	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Georgia	Alexander Chivadze	Zidane	Nedved	Van Nistelrooy
Germany	Rudi Voller	Nedved	Van Nistelrooy	Maldini
Ghana	Ralf Zumdick	Zidane	Freier	Ronaldo
Greece	Otto Rehhagel	Ronaldo	Nedved	Roberto Carlos
Grenada	Lester Smith	Zidane	Henry	Ronaldo
Guatemala	Victor Manuel Aguado Macuido	Aimar	Van Nistelrooy	Marquez
Guinea-Bissau	Cande Baciro	Ronaldo	Zidane	Van Nistelrooy
Guyana	Neider Colmerauer Dos Santos	Ronaldo	Zidane	Beckham
Haiti	Fernando Clavijo	Ronaldo	Aimar	Roberto Carlos
Holland	Dick Advocaat	Zidane	Henry	Nedved
Honduras	Bora Milutinovic	Maldini	Henry	Roberto Carlos
Hong Kong	Tsang Wai-chung	Beckham	Henry	Nedved
Hungary	Imre Gellei	Nedved	Roberto Carlos	Shevchenko
Iceland	Asgeir Sigurvinsson & Logi Olafsson	Nedved	Zidane	Van Nistelrooy
India	Stephen Constantine	Morientes	Ballack	Henry
Iran	Branko Ivankovic	Zidane	Van Nistelrooy	Nedved
Ireland, Republic	Brian Kerr	Henry	Zidane	Van Nistelrooy
Israel	Avraham Grant	Ronaldo	Zidane	Henry
Italy	Giovanni Trapattoni	Roberto Carlos	Nedved	Kahn
Jamaica	Carl Brown	Ronaldo	Cafu	Figo
Japan	Zico	Roberto Carlos	Nedved	Henry
Jordan	Mahmoud Elgohary	Zidane	Ronaldo	Roberto Carlos
Kazakhstan	Leonid Pakhomov	Zidane	Beckham	Nedved
Kyrgyzstan	Nematjan Zakirov	Shevchenko	Nedved	Van Nistelrooy
Latvia	Aleksandrs Starkovs	Nedved	Henry	Shevchenko
Lebanon	Richard Tardy	Henry	Zidane	Roberto Carlos
Liechtenstein	Walter Hormann	Nedved	Van Nistelrooy	Henry
Lithuania	Aligmantas Liubinskas	Nedved	Zidane	Beckham
Luxembourg	Allan Simonsen	Zidane	Ronaldo	Ronaldinho
Malaysia	Allan Harris	Henry	Pires	Beckham
Maldives	Manuel Gomes	Roberto Carlos	Figo	Zidane
Mali	Keita Mamaidou	Zidane	Ronaldo	Scholes
Malta	Horst Heese	Nedved	Henry	Shevchenko
Mexico	Ricardo Lavolpe	Van Nistelrooy	Zidane	Henry
Moldova	Victor Pasulko	Shevchenko	Nedved	Van Nistelrooy
Mongolia	I. Otgonbayar	Ronaldo	Zidane	Beckham
Montserrat	Ottley Laborde	Ronaldo	Zidane	Beckham
Morocco	Ezaki Badou	Zidane	Raul	Eto'o
Mozambique	Abdul Adbula	Henry	Ronaldo	Beckham
Myanmar	U Tin Han	Zidane	Nedved	Henry
Namibia	Peter Uberjahn	Beckham	Henry	Kahn
New Zealand	Paul Smalley (football director)	Raul	Henry	Desailly
Nicaragua	Mauricio Cruz	Ronaldo	Zidane	Beckham
Niger	Leo Martial Paul	Beckham	Kahn	Raul
North Korea	Ri Jong-man	Ronaldo	Rivaldo	Beckham
Northern Ireland	Sammy McIlroy	Zidane	Van Nistelrooy	Henry
Norway	Nils Johan Semb	Henry	Zidane	Ronaldo
Oman	Milan Macala	Nedved	Raul	Henry

COUNTRY	COACH	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Palestine	Necola Shahwan	Zidane	Ronaldo	Henry
Panama	Jose Eugenio Hernandez	Roberto Carlos	Zidane	Makelele
Paraguay	Anibal Ruiz	Zidane	Henry	Roberto Carlos
Peru	Paulo Autuori	Henry	Nedved	Dida
Philippines	Jose Ariston Caslib	Beckham	Kahn	Ronaldinho
Poland	Pawel Janas	Zidane	Roberto Carlos	Raul
Portugal	Luiz Felipe Scolari	Roberto Carlos	Van Nistelrooy	Nedved
Qatar	Martinus Ruijs	Henry	Nedved	Zidane
Romania	Anghel Iordanescu	Maldini	Zidane	Nedved
Russia	Georgi Yartsev	Zidane	Nedved	Ronaldo
San Marino	Giampaolo Mazza	Nedved	Buffon	F Inzaghi
Sao Tome e Principe	Jose da Luz Ferraz	Raul	Zidane	Figo
Saudi Arabia	P. G. Van der Lem	Raul	Nedved	Van der Vaart
Scotland	Berti Vogts	Ballack	Beckham	Zidane
Senegal	Guy Stephan	Zidane	Henry	Nedved
Serbia & Montenegro	Ilija Petkovic	Roberto Carlos	Henry	Nedved
Seychelles	Michael Nees	Ballack	Zidane	Henry
Singapore	Radojko Avramovic	Raul	Beckham	Figo
Slovakia	Ladislav Jurkemik	Nedved	Van Nistelrooy	Henry
Slovenia	Bojan Prasnikar	Zidane	Henry	Nedved
Solomon Islands	Matai Vave	Beckham	Henry	Masi
Somalia	Abdi Farah Ali	Ronaldo	Nedved	Van Nistelrooy
South Africa	Ephram Shailes Mashaba	Figo	Henry	Ronaldo
South Korea	Humberto Coelho	Figo	Henry	Zidane
Spain	Inaki Saez	Zidane	Nedved	Ronaldo
Sudan	Ahmed Babiker Elfaki	Ronaldo	Zidane	Beckham
Swaziland	Werner Bickelhaupt	Ronaldo	Zidane	Del Piero
Sweden	Tommy Soderberg & Lars Lagerback	Zidane	Nedved	Raul
Switzerland	Jakob Kuhn	Zidane	Van Nistelrooy	Shevchenko
Syria	Janusz Wojcik	Buffon	Nedved	A Hassan
Taiwan	Lee Po-houng	Owen	Prso	Takamatsu
Tanzania	Hafidh Badru	Zidane	Ronaldo	Beckham
Thailand	Chanvit Polchivin	Zidane	Ronaldo	Owen
Trinidad & Tobago	Stuart Charles Fevrier	Roberto Carlos	Nedved	Zidane
Tunisia	Roger Lemerre	Henry	Zidane	Roberto Carlos
Turkey	Senol Gunes	Ronaldo	Roberto Carlos	Henry
Turks & Caicos Is	Paul Crosbie	Henry	Larsson	Gattuso
Ukraine	Oleg Blokhin	Nedved	Henry	Raul
United States	Bruce Arena	Henry	Nedved	Van Nistelrooy
Uruguay	Juan Ramon Carrasco	Ronaldo	Van Nistelrooy	Saviola
US Virgin Islands	Francisco William Ramirez	Ronaldo	Henry	Maldini
Uzbekistan	Ravshan Haydarov	Ronaldo	Shevchenko	Henry
Vanuatu	Juan Carlos Buzzetti	Ronaldo	Beckham	Van Nistelrooy
Vietnam	Alfred Riedl	Zidane	Henry	Ronaldo
Zambia	Kalusha Bwalya	Henry	Van Nistelrooy	Raul

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GROUP A

24 January 19.30	Tunisia			Rwanda	Rades BBC
25 January 14.00	DR Congo			Guinea	El Menzah
28 January 19.00	Tunisia			DR Congo	Rades
28 January 14.00	Guinea			Rwanda	Bizerte
1 February 14.00	Tunisia			Guinea	Rades
1 February 14.00	DR Congo			Rwanda	Bizerte

GROUP B

26 January 19.00	Burkina Faso			Senegal	El Menzah
26 January 14.00	Kenya			Mali	Bizerte
30 January 14.00	Kenya			Senegal	Bizerte
30 January 19.00	Burkina Faso			Mali	El Menzah
2 February 14.00	Mali			Senegal	El Menzah
2 February 14.00	Burkina Faso			Kenya	Bizerte

GROUP C

25 January 19.00	Algeria			Cameroon	Sousse
25 January 16.30	Zimbabwe			Egypt	Sfax
29 January 16.30	Cameroon			Zimbabwe	Sfax
29 January 19.00	Algeria			Egypt	Sousse
3 February 14.00	Cameroon			Egypt	Monastir
3 February 14.00	Algeria			Zimbabwe	Sousse

GROUP D

27 January 14.00	Nigeria			Morocco	Monastir
27 January 18.00	Benin			South Africa	Sfax
31 January 14.00	Nigeria			South Africa	Monastir
31 January 14.00	Benin			Morocco	Sfax
4 February 18.00	Benin			Nigeria	Sfax
4 February 18.00	Morocco			South Africa	Sousse

QUARTER-FINALS

7 February 19.00	(Winner Group A) *(or winner Group B if Tunisia are runner-up A)*		25	(Runner-up Group B) *(or runner-up Group A if it is Tunisia)*	Rades BBC
7 February 14.00	(Winner Group B) *(or winner Group A if Tunisia are runner-up A)*		26	(Runner-up Group A) *(or runner-up Group B if Tunisia are runner-up A)*	Bizerte BBC
8 February 14.00	(Winner du groupe C)		27	(2e du groupe D)	Monastir BBC
8 February 17.00	(Winner du groupe D)		28	(2e du groupe C)	Rades BBC

SEMI-FINALS

11 February 19.00	(Winner 25)		29	(Winner 27)	Rades BBC
11 February 19.00	(Winner 26)		30	(Winner 28)	Sousse BBC

THIRD PLACE

13 February 14.00	(Loser 29)			(Loser 30)	Monastir BBC

FINAL

Saturday 14 February | 15.00 | Rades BBC

(Winner 29) ____ ____ (Winner 30)

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BBC *Indicates match commentary*

Kick-off times are local time (GMT+1) but may be subject to change.

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